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THE UNTRIED DOOR

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Christ and Ourselves.

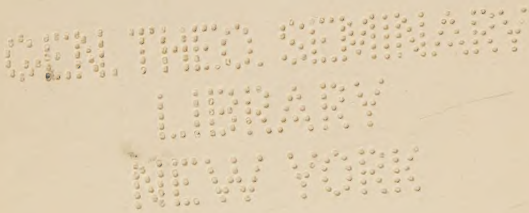
The Jesus of Poets and Prophets.

THE UNTRIED DOOR

An Attempt to Discover the Mind of Jesus for To-day

BY
RICHARD ROBERTS

"*I am the door; by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and go out, and shall find pasture.*"



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PREFACE

THIS book is meant to be of the nature of a challenge. We are being told by many voices that the only hope of the world lies in following Jesus. But we are not told with any explicitness what "following Jesus" means. Here an endeavour is made to discover the mind of Jesus and to see how far it shows us a way out of the intolerable confusion into which life has fallen.

The book does not pretend to cover all the ground except in broad outline; least of all does it pretend to be a theological interpretation of Jesus and his work in the world. Its purpose is a much simpler one. It tries to ask what Jesus actually thought and whether his thought has real applicability to the life of to-day. Had he a coherent and self-consistent philosophy of life; and if so can we translate it into life? It serves no purpose to call him LORD, *if we do not or cannot do the things he commanded.*

It will be observed that in the following pages little appeal is made to the Fourth Gospel. The writer believes that in the Fourth Gospel historical accuracy has been subordinated to the expository intention of its author. It is an interpretation rather than a chronicle. It is not for this less valuable a part of the Christian inheritance; for it is as needful for our understanding of the Gospel that we should have interpretation as it is that we should have history. The Synoptic Gospels the writer regards as giving us adequate and trustworthy material for a true estimate

of the life and mind of Jesus. They are no doubt coloured to some extent by the influences and tendencies of the time at which they were written; and a comparative study reveals the introduction into the text of a certain amount of material which seems not to be consistent with the general drift of the story. The writer has endeavoured to exercise his best judgment in these matters; and if at any point he has felt uncertainty, he has frankly admitted it.

The substance of Chapters III, IV, V (first part) and VI constituted the material of a course of lectures given on the Earl Foundation, in connection with the Pacific School of Religion, at Berkeley, California, in November, 1920.

RICHARD ROBERTS.

POSTSCRIPT.—*In reading over the proofs of this volume, it has appeared to me that the material might have been arranged somewhat differently with perhaps a little gain in coherency of treatment. In this rearrangement, the first part of Chapter V would immediately follow Chapter II, closing with a sharper definition of Jesus' principle of criticism. This principle, as I see it, is two-fold. It asks concerning an institution, a doctrine, or a course of conduct two questions: Does it make for the* INCREASE *of life? Does it make for the* UNITY *of life? Then with very slight change, Chapter III could be taken as expounding the application of the first part of this criterion; and Chapter IV as expounding the second part.*

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THE UNTRIED DOOR

BY WAY OF PROLOGUE

" He could not be hid."

NOUS avons chassé ce Jésus-Christ, said a French politician in the days—not so long ago—when the French Senate was disestablishing the Roman Catholic Church in France, doing the right thing for the wrong reason. " We have driven out this Jesus Christ," said he, as others had said much the same thing often before. But it never happens; or if it does, it is never for long. If you drive him away from this place to-day, you are apt to hear about him in some other place to-morrow. Round about the time when the French politicians were—or supposed they were—exiling him from France, the British and Foreign Bible Society reported, I remember, that the Gospel of Mark had been translated into the Chinook jargon. You may suppress him, crucify him, bury him in your Jerusalem, but you will hear of him by and by in some distant Galilee where there are eager minds and simple hearts ready to receive him. " He could not be hid." The other day I read in a periodical a passage quoted from a letter written

by Mr. Bernard Shaw to another writer: "How do you explain that you and George Moore and I are now occupying ourselves with Jesus?" And Mr. Shaw has told us (in the preface to "Androcles and the Lion") that he sees no way out of the world's misery except "that which would have been found by Christ's will if he had undertaken the work of a modern practical statesman." Mr. Bertrand Russell has told us that if men had the courage to live the life that is written of in the Gospels, the world of our dreams would come of itself, and we should not need to trouble ourselves about political and economic changes. There are others who are saying the same thing. Did not the Prime Ministers of the British Empire write a letter the other day to the people of the Empire saying that the peace and happiness of mankind depends upon a deep and sincere Christian practice? It looks indeed as though Jesus were coming back.

There can be no doubt about the revived interest in him, though it is by no means sure that those who have, as it were, newly discovered him understand what it is they have discovered. Some for instance appear to suppose that the Gospels are the source of the conventions of Anglo-American middle-class piety and that these together with a little mild encouragement to goodwill and mutual service constitute the spirit of Jesus. But whether Jesus is understood or not, it is certain that he is more and more talked about. His name crops up in all sorts of unexpected places.

Statesmen have taken to alluding to him; journalists quote him; politicians refer to him. That means something, surely. And does it not mean that the old way of running the world has proved itself bankrupt, that the professionals of politics and statecraft have grown sceptical of the virtue of their machinery? And well, indeed, they might. Mark Twain once said that he would like to meet the devil, for, said he, "a person who has for untold centuries maintained his imposing position of spiritual head of four-fifths of the human race, and political head of the whole of it must be granted the possession of executive abilities of the highest order." Allow for the Twain touch, and then dispute, if you can, the essential truth of the saying. Thomas Carlyle, after vainly trying to convince Emerson of the personality of the devil, is said to have taken him, as a last resort, to a sitting of the British House of Commons. This is not to say that there have not been great and good men concerned in the conduct of public affairs from the beginning of time; but clearly there is something deeply wrong somewhere. You need only look on the world as it is to-day, this wild inferno of greed, hunger, passion, fear and death, this sorrowful harvest of blood and fire and shame, to know what manner of things we and our fathers have sown. And out of this grim hole, who shall dig us? Our politicians, our statesmen? But can they who digged the hole, by the same methods dig us out of it? I trow not. They are far more likely to bury us deeper in it, as they are doing to-day. And what is

more, they are beginning to see it. They know in their hearts that the old game of power is up and that the world must find some other way. That is why some of them are turning preacher.

Perhaps (God send it!) this new interest in Jesus is the shadow cast by the coming event. Can it mean that he is coming back? But if he come, he will come not as a super-politician to rule us with a rod of iron, to discipline us to our senses, but to our hearts and lives to win us back to simplicity and lowliness, to help us build our house of life with stones of love and truth and beauty. The old policies are working themselves out in this chaotic and heaving aftermath of war; the old order passeth before our eyes. The confused noises of to-day are its death-rattle; revolutions, strikes, famine, disease—these things are the death-sweat upon its face. The old order is dying in this night of delirium and despair. And then . . . ? Must it be the old, old story of building on rotten foundations, of labour laden with fated mortality, the same old round on a larger scale sowing a still vaster harvest of death? Must it be so? Or is there another way? We are at last beginning to see it dimly, afar off. It is slowly dawning on us that it might be well to try the way of Jesus.

. . . . . .

I once heard a friend tell this reminiscence of his boyhood. He lived in a quiet village on a river-side, half girdled with hills, far from the madding crowd.

But once a year a fair was held in the village; and early in the day the horses and cattle and sheep were driven in from the surrounding country-side. And with them, came pedlars and hucksters with strange wares, gipsies and tinkers, horse-dealers and cheap-jacks—a motley, noisy crew. And along came the showmen with their circuses, their Aunt Sallies and their merry-go-rounds. While the day was yet young, the quiet old-world village had been turned into a drunken, roaring hell. The narrow, cobbled streets were strewn with the untidy, filthy litter that a fair always brings with it, and the beauty was turned into ashes. But as the day wore on to evening, the trafficking and the bargaining drew to an end, and the invaders began to pack up their traps and leave. The showmen pulled down their tents, and the pedlars put up their wares and began to drift away. The noise slowly died down; the village emptied itself of the unaccustomed riffraff that had invaded it. By sundown, the whole mob was going or gone—and the villagers stood in their street and watched them go, one after another . . . until the last caravan of the last showman dropped out of sight over the bend of the hill; and the village returned to its own peace.

So, said my friend, the true world of life has been invaded by a show, a Vanity Fair that has turned its peace into tumult, its beauty into squalor, its joy into pain. A false and illusory doctrine has imposed itself on the truth of life, and we are living in a world of unreality and mistaking it for the real. There is the

peepshow of politics, with its armies of little men, ignorant, thoughtless, dull, making tremendous gestures and playing with issues of life and death; there is the great show of statecraft, with "Big Fours" or "Big Fives" sitting around a green table prescribing the destinies of nations to suit their formulæ or their fears; the tragic show of war, with its madness and bloodlust and hate and its strange splendid heroisms—and its still more tragic aftermath—

> "The many men, so beautiful!
> And they all dead did lie:
> And a thousand thousand slimy things
> Lived on; and so did I——"

and you and all of us who were not worthy of so great devotion; the godless show of empire with its tawdry trappings and pomps and boastings, with its oppressions and tyrannies and its contempt of subject peoples; the ghastly show of commercialized pleasure with its harlotry, its drinking-hells, its gambling-dens and its corruption of art; the frenzied show of money-getting with its thousand perversions of mind and heart, the mutual exploitation, the scalp-hunting, the striking, the heresy-hunting . . . oh, but what a mad, mad world it is!

But this carnival of all the follies will work itself out, exhausting itself by its own excess; and the dance of death will begin to pall and lose its zest. The tumult will die away, and the showmen will find that

the hour has come to pack up their traps and go. . . . One by one they will vanish from the landscape; and not we, but perhaps our children's children will see the last caravan of the last showman disappear in the distance over the bend of the hill . . . and life will be left to its appointed peace. And there will be left with us perchance an Isaiah to speak to us of God, and a Francis to teach us simplicity and purity of heart, and a Lincoln to keep us in the ways of sanity, —yes, and when the pall of illusion is wholly lifted, JESUS, where (had we but known it) he has always been, *standing in the midst.*

. . . . . .

But though it be a far cry to this last act in the drama of the world, it need be no far cry to its last act in your spirit. The shadow of the City of Destruction with its carnival of tragic folly is upon our souls: the passing show with its "magic shadow-shapes that come and go," Vanity Fair with its mad, bad, sad illusions—well, but we may quit them whensoever we will. We may bid the tumult and the shouting die; we may bid the showmen and the cheapjacks pack up their wares and go their way. And at our bidding they will go, one after another . . . until the last wagon of the show vanishes in the cool of the evening over the crest of the hill. Then you open your eyes and find yourself in Galilee, that country of the mind whither the Lord of Life has gone before you and is waiting for you, to give you life and health

and peace. And you will know that all the rest is illusion and delirium, that to be with Jesus in Galilee is alone reality and life. When you have turned your back on the City of Death, when its vain dreams are gone up in smoke, its noisy pretensions and its hollow little triumphs but a stack of pitiful dust, then life in all its splendour and wonder dawns and calls you—with Jesus the glory in the midst of it.

And this is, I think, the beginning of what Jesus meant by the Kingdom of God.

CHAPTER I

THE WORLD AS JESUS SAW IT

(Matt. ix. 35-36; x. 5-7; Mark iv. 12-17; Luke iv. 42-44.)[1]

I

"When he beheld the multitudes, he was moved with compassion for them, because they were distressed and scattered as sheep having no shepherd."

THE outward conditions of life in the society into which Jesus was born have been so often described that we do not need to rehearse them in detail here. At bottom, however, the life of Palestine, as Jesus saw it, was not essentially different from the common life of human society in every age and in every land. It was not an industrial society as we understand the term. It was not vexed with what we call capitalism. But it was a competitive society; and the competitive system had wrought in it its characteristic result.

To state it very summarily, this result is the division of society into two broad classes. Disraeli once spoke of the "two nations" that inhabited England

[1] A reading of the passages indicated at the beginning of each chapter will furnish the Scriptural background of the ensuing discussion.

—the ruling classes and the rest. But every known society has had its "two nations." "The poor," said Jesus, "ye have always with you";[1] and with the poor, their masters. In human society, you always have the top-dog and the under-dog. On one hand, tyrannies, feudalisms, oligarchies, plutocracies; on the other, chattel slavery, serfdom, villenage, "wagery"—this schism has been the ancient curse of our race.

In Palestine, there was a double cleavage. Neither was economic as the great modern cleavage is, though both had definite economic consequences. For both made heavy inroads upon the none too abundant resources of the peasantry. The first cleavage was associated with religion. There a privileged class lorded it over the souls of men, caring little for the common folk save only as they provided a pedestal for their own eminence and a source of income for the temple and its officers. But this particular cleavage was a purely domestic affair; and the burden that it imposed provoked no such resentment as did the foreign political yoke which the people were compelled to bear. The Jews were a subject people; and being a proud people, with a long and notable history, they hated their Roman masters with an unrelenting bitterness.[2]

[1] Matt. xxvi. 11.

[2] Historically, it would appear that the Jews had less to complain of their imperial masters than some other subject nations have had. By and large, the Roman was a tolerant ruler; and he was, as a rule, unusually tolerant in his dealings with the Jews. But this did not alter the fact that he was an alien invader; and the misbehaviour of some of his agents—political and fiscal—did not help to reconcile the Jew to his dominion.

And to bitterness was added despair; for the Roman power seemed unassailable. Again and again the Jews had tried to throw off this alien yoke, but always with the same disastrous result. The yoke was fastened on more firmly than ever. Their own great men, who in their hearts desired to see the overthrow of the Roman power, yet cared too much for their own security and position to take any of the risks involved in the task of emancipation.[1] No wonder the multitudes seemed to Jesus to be leaderless and disorganized. And in this tragedy, he found the problem of his life.

II

"He asked them, What were ye reasoning in the way? But they held their peace: for they had disputed with one another in the way, who was the greatest."

Just as it appears to many people to-day that the only remedy for our social confusion is the speedy destruction of the capitalist system, so it seemed to many in Jesus' day that the plain way out of the national distress was the swift and violent overthrow of the Roman power. Now and again, some patriotic soul would raise the standard of revolt in the hill-country, and many would rally to it in the desperate hope of driving the oppressive foreigner out of the

[1] The Herods, however, consistently maintained a family tradition of apparently genuine loyalty to the Empire.

land. But there was a strategic reason why the Romans would not countenance an independent Palestine, and they suppressed these risings with vigour and dispatch.[1] Jesus from the first seems to have perceived the futility of the policy of his fellow-countrymen, and he saw that the real trouble was too deep-seated to be disposed of merely by substituting one political system for another. When he traced the trouble to its roots, he saw that it was a distemper from which the Jew suffered no less than the Roman. So inveterate was this disorder that it was continually putting out its head even among Jesus' closest friends. It was the source of the Pharisees' pride; it was the foundation upon which the imperial pride of Rome was reared. This radical disorder was that self-love which was a denial of the law that bade men love God and their neighbours. The impulse of self-love sets the strong man on the throne and the weak man under his feet. Not that the weak man has any less self-love, but having less capacity, in the scramble for the prizes of self-love, he goes under and the strong man rides him.

[1] It might not be amiss to cite a modern parallel by way of illustration. It is a "strategic" reason that stands in the way of British recognition of Irish independence. The Jews had also their Sinn Fein party—the Zealots—though it is probable that they were not known by that name in the lifetime of Jesus. The description of Simon in the Gospels as "the Zealot" was probably due to his association with some party that had affinities with and may have been a precursor of the Zealots who according to Josephus were not known by that name before A.D. 66. On the Zealots see Foakes Jackson and Kirsopp Lake, *The Beginnings of Christianity*, Vol. I, Appendix I, p. 421.

It is hard to say which of these two conditions is the more demoralizing. The top-dog becomes hardened and brutalized; the under-dog is crushed and dehumanized. The tyrant grows more tyrannous, the serf more servile. The despot tightens the bands of coercion, the helot counters it with cunning. Power, pride, arrogance breed a moral insensibility hardly curable; oppression and fear lead to habits of deceit and the meaner tactics of self-preservation. It is a historical commonplace that long continued oppression breaks the moral backbone of a class or a people; and the disinherited reproduce among themselves the predatory habits of the privileged. "One could not be deaf or blind," says Lord Morley in his *Reminiscences,* "to the obvious fact that the bitterest complaints on the lips of the Irish tenants were constantly found not to be directed against the landlord, but either against his father for dividing the farm, or his brother for marrying, or his neighbour for bidding against him. The efforts of the League (the Irish Land League) have been as much directed against the covetousness of tenants in face of one another as against the covetousness of landlords and agents." One may hear echoes of a like social disintegration in the Gospels.

Lord Morley, in another place, speaks of "that horrid burden and impediment upon the soul which the Churches call Sin, and which by whatever name you call it, is a real catastrophe in the moral nature of man." The theologian may call it sin, but the name

is immaterial. The thing itself is simply and only self-love. And from this our whole human tragedy springs. "When," says the *Theologia Germanica,* an invaluable little book of devotion which has come down to us from the Middle Ages, "the creature claimeth for its own anything good such as Substance, Knowledge, Life, Power, and in short, everything that we should call good, as if it were that or possessed that . . . as often as this cometh to pass, the creature goeth astray. What did the Devil do else, or what was his going astray but that he claimed for himself to be also somewhat and would have it that somewhat was his and something was due to him? This setting up of a claim, and his I and Me and Mine, these were his going astray and his Fall. And so it is to this day." There as simply as possible is the central mystery of sin. It is unsocial or anti-social conduct; but whatever is anti-social is anti-social toward God no less than toward man. Sin is self-assertion as against both God and man. It is at once a wronging of man and rebellion against God.

And because this self-love is in the saddle, it produces a world of strife. "Sin being a principle of egoism and isolation," said that great French priest and lover of freedom, Lamennais, "it forces each to lose himself in his own individuality. The insatiable Ego breathes in all that lies around it; it swells itself, develops, grows steadily and absorbs all that is weaker into it . . . and it can be stopped in its progress only by another tyrant equal to it or superior to

it. There is a struggle, bloody, pitiless; and the hideous society which is composed of these things is but the seething mass of hungry combatants who come together only to devour one another. . . . This is the state of which sin has made us members."

Here is a social diagnosis which is true of all time, true of the time of Jesus as of ours. When Newman looked out upon the world, he saw (as he says in his *Apologia pro Vita Sua*) "a heart-piercing, reason-bewildering spectacle." Had he been living to-day, one wonders what language he would have used to describe the world upon which we are looking. The essential problem of man has never changed. It is to find a remedy for his self-love.

III

"Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

It cannot be too clearly understood in these days when so much talk about revolution is abroad, and Jesus is sometimes claimed as a proletarian leader, that there is nothing in his story—whether word or deed—that can be quoted in support of what is popularly called revolution. He saw that even if the Romans could be driven out, it would only leave the petty princes, the courtiers and the ecclesiastics a freer hand. And it almost seems as though Jesus disliked the Romans less than he disliked the native grandees. Certainly we have no record of his having spoken a

harsh word concerning the Romans, while his language about the Pharisees never lacks vigour; and that profligate princeling, the Herod of his day, he called a fox.[1] A successful revolution against the Romans would not remove the leprosy that was eating up society; it would only redistribute it. Nevertheless Jesus saw that nothing short of a revolution was called for by the state of the case. But the revolution that he saw necessary would move on a deeper level and would deal with the disease itself and not with its symptoms. And it was such a revolution that he preached.

We have heard latterly a good deal about the need of a change of heart as the first condition of a "new world." It is true that few people have paid serious heed to what they have heard, supposing that, after all, political schemes, economic changes and the like are much shorter roads to that new world of justice and peace towards which men's eyes looked so eagerly during the Great War. But to anyone that looks out on this world of men and things with any measure of moral insight, it should be plain beyond need of proof that we shall have no manner of new world without a moral revolution, which is another way of speaking of a change of heart. This was precisely what Jesus believed in his own day; and the first thing he did in his public ministry was to call for such a moral revolution. His first word was REPENT.

When we speak of repentance we are commonly

[1] Luke xiii. 32.

apt to think of it as penitence. Penitence is sorrow for sin, but repentance means turning away from sin. Penitence is an emotion, repentance is an act of will. And while it is true that there can be no repentance without a measure of penitence, yet it is the fact that the deepest penitence is that which follows repentance. Literally the word as it is used in the Gospels means a " change of mind," but its plain meaning upon the lips of Jesus is *the will to live a different kind of life.* When Jesus said, Repent, he meant, *Turn around,* and it was a turning away from that self-love which set a man in opposition both to God and to his neighbour. It was a single act with a double reaction. It would set a man right with God and with his fellow, not set him right with one by setting him right with the other, but set him right with both at one stroke by giving him a change of heart.

But Jesus did not stop at that point. Repentance is after all a negative thing, and men are too apt to be content with negative achievement. Again and again in history men have supposed that if they could break down some exclusive privilege or remove some public evil, the golden age would follow as a matter of course. But it has never done so; on the contrary, it has often opened the door to greater evils. The French Revolution opened the door to Napoleon and then to the untempered competition of our modern industrial civilization. Jesus, in a vivid little parable, warns us against merely negative reformations. " The unclean spirit, when he is gone out of the man, passeth

through waterless places, seeking rest and findeth it not. Then he said, 'I will return unto my house, whence I came out,' and when he is come he findeth it empty, swept and garnished. Then goeth he and taketh seven other spirits more evil than himself; and they enter in and dwell there.'"[1] The great tragedy of revolution is that the destructive impulse is so rarely accompanied by a definite alternative to the past. If the repentance was not to prove futile and pointless there must go with it a new rule and plan of life.

IV

"My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight . . . but now is my kingdom not from hence."

"Repent," said Jesus, "for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." It was a bold thing on Jesus' part to take this word, "the kingdom of heaven" or, as some scholars have translated it, the "realm of heaven" or the "rule of God," to describe that new rule and plan of life to which he was calling his fellow-countrymen. The idea was in common circulation; and the phrase itself in some Aramaic equivalent was probably upon the lips of the people at the time. But it would be a very considerable error to suppose that Jesus gave to it the same connotation as that of the popular use of it. Indeed, it is one of the dangers of the critical study

[1] Matt. xii. 43-45.

of the Gospels that the inquiry into the contemporary sources of the phrases and expressions which are to be found in the body of Jesus' teaching tends to assume overmuch that the previous and contemporary signification of these terms fixes their meaning in Jesus' use of them. It is one of the assumptions of this present study, based upon a careful examination of the point, that Jesus, while he adopted for his own purposes certain words and phrases which were current in his time and which possessed a certain technical meaning in the contemporary use, nevertheless added so much to them or so changed the emphasis in them that they became in his hands virtually new terms; and their ultimate meaning must be found not in their history but in a comparative study of Jesus' use of them. One such transfigured term is the "kingdom of heaven" or "the kingdom of God."

When Jesus used this term, his hearers were undoubtedly familiar with it. But the image it evoked in their minds was not that which Jesus had in his mind. For them, the "kingdom" was chiefly a political thing, an external order of life in which they would be free and happy. As we have seen, these people were very unhappy and not at all free. For the most part they laid their troubles down to the Roman occupation. And they were looking forward to a "good time" in which their troubles would be ended. They did not all look for it to come in the same way. Their Sinn Feiners, who afterwards came to be known as the Zealots, believed that the only way to hasten the

good time was through the violent overthrow of the Roman power. But it would appear that the people as a whole despaired of its coming by any human agency. They had come to believe that one of these days God would take the matter in hand Himself, sweep the Romans into the sea and establish his people in a proud independence. But, however it came, the one thing they were all looking for was to see the last of the Romans, and then they were all going to live happily ever afterwards.

But the kingdom which Jesus preached to them was not of that order. This good time that you are expecting, he seems to have said to them, this "rule of God" of which you speak so much and which you understand so little, is at hand, here by you and round about you; and you can have it whensoever you will. It is not something that is waiting for you round the corner when the Romans have packed their traps and gone home, not something that is going to break out of the blue, to-morrow or some other day. The kingdom of God is at hand, among you, even in you. Rise to your feet and possess it.[1]

Let it not be supposed, however, that the kingdom

[1] There are passages in the Gospels in which the kingdom is spoken of as something in the future. But this involves no real difficulty; the future kingdom is the perfect consummation of the kingdom which is at present realized only in part. A question of more difficulty is whether the Gospels identify the future kingdom with the "world (or the age) to come" or with the kingdom of the expected Messiah. This is, however, chiefly a problem for the critic; what is of moment to us is to work out the implications for ourselves of the undoubted spiritual and inward content which was Jesus' fundamental thought concerning the kingdom.

was a mere gospel of consolation, a sort of refuge from the harsh demands of life, an anodyne for the contemporary distress. Jesus was not offering to men a plan for making life endurable under the hardships that they suffered. He was deliberately calling men to a way of life which would presently undermine the existing political and ecclesiastical order. It might on the face of it seem a long and tedious way of accomplishing that end; and we can well imagine that the zealot would be impatient with the impracticability of it. But Jesus saw that violence, whatever promise of swift redress it might appear to contain, was no solution for what was after all a moral problem. He knew that his business lay at a deeper level than that of the politician or the rebel, whether in church or state. He was seeking to evoke a new life which would function independently of the existing institutions and would destroy them by making them functionless. In the parable of the wine-skins[1] he pleads that the old wine-skins be left undamaged. The new task was that of making a new vintage and new wine-skins for it. In the process of time the old wine would settle on its lees, and the old wine-skins would be discarded for want of use. So Jesus saw the political and ecclesiastical institutions of his time dying of inanition because the real life of the people had come to function outside of them, and had created its own institutions for its own needs.

If, so far, this account of the matter makes Jesus

[1] Matt. ix. 17.

seem too preoccupied with a merely local and national situation, there is a twofold answer.

First, Jesus saw in the national problem an epitome of the world problem. Israel was a parable of mankind. While it is true that he made but one brief sojourn beyond the frontiers of Palestine, the outside world had crossed those frontiers often enough to show any person of insight what its real quality was. Jesus knew perfectly well what went on in the great world without. "The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them and they that have authority over them are called Benefactors."[1] This last is a touch of irony, not yet out of date, for we have lived to hear imperialists talk of bringing the "blessings of civilization" to the "lesser breeds without the law," covering exploitation with a cloak of philanthropy. The kingdoms of this world have their own *kultur* and their own *technique;* and Palestine had had long and bitter experience of them. An intelligent Jew had no need of foreign travel to know the way of the world, if he knew the history of his own people. He might not perhaps perceive that the way of the world was not materially different from the way of his own people, but Jesus with his clear sense of moral distinctions saw that between the Jew and the Gentile, there was (as Paul said later on) no difference. In dealing with the distemper of his own people, he was dealing with the distemper of the race.

Second, it is clear that Jesus, certainly in the early

[1] Luke xxii. 25.

stages of his ministry, and in all probability throughout, based his hope of the redemption of the world upon the redemption of his own people. They had had a long and varied discipline which marked them out for a peculiar function in the plan of God. Some of the later Hebrew prophets saw a vision of Israel invested with a rôle of spiritual leadership among the nations of the earth, and Jesus, who had sprung from the little remnant of "devout" folk who waited for the "consolation of Israel," and who clung to the old prophetic tradition, seems to have cherished the same hope for his people. The first period of his public ministry was spent in preaching in the synagogues of Galilee, in the hope that there might be a spiritual renewal within the existing religious institutions. This hope had to be abandoned; but apart from the period which was spent in a journey with the disciples in the country north of Palestine, the whole public ministry of Jesus was exercised in relation to his own people, even though it had ceased to move within the traditional institutions. From first to last, his plan was to redeem Israel, in the faith that a redeemed Israel would mean at last a redeemed world.

CHAPTER II

The Roots of the New Life

(Matt. v. 1-9; vi. 1-5, 9-13; vii. 25-34; xvii. 1-8; Mark x. 13-25.)

I

"If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?"

BACK of everything in the mind of Jesus was a simple unwavering confidence in the friendliness of God. He was not the first to call God a Father, but none ever called him by that name so consistently or accepted the logic of the name with so great completeness. In the Parable of the Average Father[1] he frankly accepts human fatherhood as a faint image of the divine fatherhood; and he habitually uses language which describes God as being in an attitude of intimate fatherly solicitude toward men. "Your heavenly Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask Him."[2] "Are not two sparrows

[1] Matt. vii. 9-11. [2] Matt. vi. 8.

sold for a farthing? and not one of them shall fall on the ground without your Father: but the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not, therefore; ye are of more value than many sparrows.'"[1] Men needed to realize that God was on their side. It was not an easy lesson for those people to learn. Between the statesman and the churchman they lived a thin and precarious life, and of the security of life that all men crave for they had little or none. The Roman was no friend of theirs. Neither was the Pharisee. How then should God who seemed to allow these people to prosper be the peasant's friend? Yet Jesus went on affirming that God was their father. He saw that the first thing that his people needed was courage to live. They were crushed between the upper and nether millstones, they had lost heart, were "distressed and scattered." Despair had overtaken them; they lived their daily lives on the basis of their fears, and their hope of the Good Time did little to comfort them through their miserable days. They were willless and demoralized. And for this condition there is but one antidote—faith, which is *the will to face life on the assumption that God is love.*

One of the strangest criticisms that has been passed on Christianity is that it puts a premium upon weakness, and that its main gift to man is a grace that enables him to endure evil conditions that he cannot remove or remedy. It is certainly true that Christianity does bring such a gift to men, but it is a curious

[1] Matt. x. 29-31.

and indeed an inexcusable misreading of the Gospels to suppose that this is the supreme gift of Christ. There are—and until mankind has achieved mastery over nature and its own passions, there always will be—times and seasons when our chief need is patience. But the word "faith" as used in the Gospels implies something much greater than a grace of submission. It is rather a kind of invincible energy. It is not a power by which life can be made tolerable under evil conditions so much as a power to transform those conditions. It is not a means by which one may thread a precarious path through the wilderness of this world, but a might whereby we may conquer the wilderness and make it to blossom as the rose. "If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you"[1]—which is only a vivid way of saying that there need not be within the whole area of our life any such thing as an insoluble problem, or an insuperable difficulty or an unrealizable ideal. Strange doctrine to preach to a hopeless and impotent peasantry; yet it was only the simple and inevitable logic of the great assumption with which Jesus set out. "If God is for us," as St. Paul said in later days, "who is against us?"[2]

[1] Matt. xvii. 20. [2] Rom. viii. 31.

II

"I came that they may have life, and may have it abundantly."

But the quickening of hope was for Jesus but the beginning of things. He had indeed to stir the people out of their apathetic acquiescence in things as they were before he could do anything else for them. He had to make them believe that their distresses were not incurable, that things could be different from what they were. But the "good news" which he preached to the poor was not a promise of a vague "good time coming." It was indeed not what the people expected —for, as we have seen, they darkly looked for some political deliverance—that Jesus promised to them. He brought to them an offer of life.

For Jesus the greater and better part of life was out of sight. But he found men living the mere rind of life, wading in its shallows, dwelling on the outside of things—some spending their days in a ceaseless round of toil to provide for themselves and their families the bare necessaries of life, and others in a greedy gathering of more material good than they needed; but both alike missing the real point of life. "Be not anxious," he said to the former, "about your food and drink and clothing. Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of these things. Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness."[1] And of the latter he said, "A man's life con-

[1] Matt. vi. 31-33.

sisteth not in the abundance of the things he possesseth,"[1] and "How hardly shall they that have riches enter the kingdom of heaven!"[2] And one man of this class he called a fool. He summed the whole matter up when he met his first temptation with an old saying: "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."[3]

By this, Jesus meant that just as there is a natural craving which is satisfied by bread, so there is another craving no less natural which requires for its satisfaction what Jesus calls the "word of God," by which he means a conscious vitalizing vision of God and fellowship with Him. It was of this same longing that Saint Augustine was speaking. "Thou hast made us for thyself and our heart is never at rest until it rest in Thee." William Blake once said that the body was that part of the soul that we can see; and it does not appear that Jesus was much concerned with that antithesis between body and soul of which we make so much. He was not primarily concerned with the soul and its salvation as we conceive of these things; and the Revised Version of the Bible rightly uses the word "life" in certain places where the Authorized had "soul." Jesus thought rather in terms of life. He saw men living "at a poor dying rate," living a mere fraction of their possible life. Did they but know it, there were within them unfathomable depths of life which were available for

[1] Luke xii. 15. [2] Mark x. 23. [3] Matt. iv. 4.

them whensoever they had the wit and the will to call them up. It is true that he did not despise the body or the physical life—his whole story is replete with instances of a distinctively physical ministry. Nor (we may presume) was this ministry only a work of compassion. He knew that physical disorders had their echoes in the soul and militated against fullness of life. They diverted the mind from the main pursuit. So he healed men's bodies; but he told them that their true life depended upon the "word that cometh from the mouth of God."

In the middle of the last century a famous London minister wrote a book which he called "*How to Make the Best of Both Worlds.*" That was the way they looked upon it in those days. Here are two worlds, the world that now is, and the world to come, each with its own characteristic prizes; and the problem of life was how to make the best of both worlds—how to get on prosperously in this world and how to get safely into the next. But Jesus did not see the matter in this light. For him the problem of life was *how to live in the two worlds at the same time.* This is what is called "eternal life" in the Fourth Gospel, and when Jesus said that he came that men might have life, this is the life of which he was thinking.

There are in the main three attitudes that men have taken to this world. First is the view that the world of sense is the only world there is and that it is our business to exploit it as sedulously as we may for our own aggrandisement and pleasure. The second is the

extreme opposite view, taken by some philosophers and mystics, that this world of sense is appearance and illusion, and that the only reality is the invisible world. The third is the view held by some ascetics and certain evangelical sects, that this world is all too real and altogether evil, and that we should have as little to do with it as we can. That is to say, men have looked upon the world as something to be either exploited, or denied, or despised. But neither of these attitudes did Jesus take. He did not exploit or deny or despise the world. He took the world for granted as a part of the universe of God. Just as William Blake, when he said that the body is the part of the soul that you can see, might have gone on to say that the world is that part of the universe that you can see, so Jesus might have said that the world is that fragment of the Father's House that is exposed to human sense. But the greater part is out of sight and is visible only to the eye of faith.

This unseen world was as real to Jesus as the world of sense is real to the ordinary man; and he would have it become as real to other men as it was to him. It would have been unthinkable to him that men should ever come seriously to believe that their life was wholly contained within this tangible visible world; and that their only organs of perception were the senses and the reasoning faculty. In this region, he would have said, You are only on the threshold of life; and even then you cannot perceive this concrete sense-world aright unless you see in it and through it

a good deal more than your eyes can see. Live the life of sense, "by bread alone," and you will live only in this world of things, and things will be your masters; but live the life of faith, and you will live in the two worlds at once, for you will be living in the *whole* of God's universe all the time.

The nature and quality of this life it is not easy to describe. Even Jesus, who lived it in its fullness, did not find it easy to tell about it. This was due partly to the dullness and the apathy of the people with whom he had to do; so dull and inert were they that he had to startle them by using large and staggering images of moving mountains and uprooting sycamore trees.[1] That was, however, not the chief reason. The difficulty in describing this life lies in the subject-matter and in the limitations of language.

Speech is an instrument which has been fashioned by life in the process of its unfolding for the purpose of human fellowship. But the materials out of which speech has been evolved belong to the world of time and space. This can be seen plainly from the words which have been minted to describe that part of life that men have always dimly felt to lie beyond what they can see. We speak of it as supernatural, or suprasensible, or infinite; and when we speak of it as eternal we mean that it is either timeless or endless. We describe the hidden universe by saying what it is not. We have as yet no glossary for the unseen. So that when Jesus or any one who has the necessary

[1] Matt. xvii. 20; Luke xvii. 6.

spiritual insight states a proposition that is true to the whole of life—life, that is, which is lived in the seen and in the unseen at once, he has to do it in paradox. A paradox is a truth stated in the form of a verbal contradiction; and the teaching of Jesus is full of paradoxes. "He that loseth his life shall find it."[1] "To him that hath shall be given, and from him that hath not even that which he hath shall be taken away."[2] "Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth."[3] It is a twisting of language, a bending of words back upon themselves to say the unsayable. Of all this the moral is tolerably plain. We shall have the clue to the words of Jesus when we have the life of which he speaks.

It may be added in this connection that we have here the clue to what are called the "hard sayings" of Jesus. In some of his sayings, he imposes upon us conduct that seems utterly beyond our capacity—turning the other cheek, forgiving unto seventy times seven, and the like.[4] The thing, we say is impossible; and Jesus does not mean us to take it literally. But it is impossible simply because we do not possess the life to which that sort of conduct comes naturally, and to which nothing is impossible. The life to which Jesus called men is of a scale and power beyond anything that we can conceive in the light of nature.

[1] Matt. x. 39.
[2] Matt. xiii. 12.
[3] Matt. v. 5.
[4] Matt. v. 39, xviii. 22.

III

"Except ye turn and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven."

To enter this new life, there must be, as we have seen, repentance, a break with the past. The customary motions of life have to be reversed. A new *technique* of life has to be acquired. The accepted valuations of life must be superseded. And the first thing that has to go is *externality*. For externality is a categorical denial of the unseen.

Jesus and the people had before their eyes a company of persons who were apt in all the arts of externality. They cared little how foul the inside of the cup might be so long as the outside was clean. These were the people who "did their righteousness before men, to be seen of them,"[1] who "stood praying in the synagogues and on the street-corners,"[2] addressing their prayers to a gallery of their fellowmen. Here, says Jesus, is the precise antithesis of what you should be. For to him these men were virtually atheists, who denied "the Father which seeth in secret."[3] And even worse, they exploited the things of God in the interests of their own self-esteem. That was why Jesus called them hypocrites, "play-

[1] Matt. vi. 1. [2] Matt. vi. 5. [3] Matt. vi. 6.

actors,"[1] men who were playing a part. In the kingdom of heaven, men must have what the Psalmist called "truth in the inward parts." "Blessed," said Jesus, "are the pure in heart, the sincere, the single-minded; for they shall see God."[2]

And with sincerity, there must go an unaffected simplicity of mind. We must, says Jesus, become as little children. This, for sensitive souls, is the hardest of all Jesus' hard sayings. For our minds have so long and so sadly parted with their virginity; they are contaminated and clogged by that ponderous (but oh! so futile) worldly wisdom which we suppose ourselves to have gathered with the years. We have acquired what men call practicality, hard-headedness, *savoir faire*—a sophistication which is in the end but a hardening of the tissues of the soul. But to reverse all the acquired habits of the years and begin all over again! Yet so it must be if we are to gain the kingdom of heaven and the reality of life. For the simplicity of the child is a sensibility to the unseen. Is it not written that God reveals to babes what He hides from the wise and prudent[3]—those things that are so much greater than anything we can say about them? President Eliot once said that if a dog or a child, after looking you in the face, refuses for any reason other than timidity to come to you, you had better go home and examine yourself. This is a true and luminous saying. The child has its own "wireless," which

[1] Matt. vi. 2. [2] Matt. v. 8. [3] Luke x. 21.

brings it information that is denied to the wise and prudent.

"Heaven lies about us in our infancy"; and that is more than a piece of pretty sentimentality. The thing is so, only we have become too case-hardened and opaque-minded to recognize it.

> "The drift of pinions, would we hearken,
> Beats at our own clay-shuttered doors."

"Know you," asks the poet who sang these lines, the blessed Francis Thompson, "know you what it is to be a child? It is to be something very different from the man of to-day. It is to have a spirit yet streaming from the waters of baptism; it is to believe in love, to believe in loveliness, to believe in belief; it is to be so little that the elves can reach to whisper in your ear; it is to turn pumpkins into coaches, and mice into horses, and nothing into everything; for each child has its fairy godmother in its own soul; it is to live in a nutshell and count yourself the king of infinite space; it is

> "To see a world in a grain of sand,
> And heaven in a wild flower;
> Hold infinity in the palm of your hand,
> And eternity in an hour."

And "of such is the kingdom of heaven."[1]

[1] Mark x. 14.

Of course, we cannot acquire the child-spirit on the spot, nor indeed in many days. It will take us long to unswathe our minds from the thick blinding folds of our sophistications. But with patience it can be done. What is more, if we want life, it must be done. "Except a man be born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God."[1]

IV

"Ask and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you."

But what are we to do with this child-mind when we have it? The answer is surely in the question; for what should the child-mind do but seek the parent-mind?

Prayer occupies a very considerable place in the teaching of Jesus, and a still more considerable place in his life. He does not argue about it save only by one or two analogies from human behaviour to show how inevitable a thing it is that God should attend to his children's prayers. For the rest he takes it for granted, much as he takes eating and breathing for granted—something that men did because it was natural for them to do it, once they had found themselves.

This is not the place to discuss the doctrine and

[1] John iii. 3.

practice of prayer in general. It is, however, material to our purpose to observe that prayer in its perfect expression seemed to Jesus to be an act whereby a man brings himself into harmony with the will of God. We are sometimes apt to think of it as something that bends the will of God to our purposes and desires. The present writer once lived on the top of a hill, and he became accustomed to the sight of bicycles which were fitted with a little motor attachment in order to help the rider up the hill. And that is pretty much what prayer means to most people. It is a sort of motor attachment to life by which we are able to ride uphill, to do things that we should otherwise be unable to do for ourselves. But prayer is not a special exercise for emergencies, a means of getting us out of tight corners, or to enable us to overcome difficulties. It is rather an act in which we gather up and express our own longing to be brought into unity with the will of God. Nor is it to be expressed in terms of mere submission to the will of God. When Jesus teaches us to pray and what to pray for, the things that he puts on our lips to pray for are things that commit us to a kind of co-operation with God. When we say what is called the " Lord's Prayer," we ask for nothing which we ourselves are not required to aid in accomplishing.

But prayer reaches a still higher plane when it is assiduously continued in. That plane is when petition ceases and only communion remains. On several occasions Jesus, we are told, went up into the mountain and to desert places to pray; and once he spent

the night in prayer.[1] We are not told anything of the mysterious commerce that went on between Jesus and his Father; but we may not doubt that those solitary communings were the very springs of his life and power. And equally we may not doubt that in such sustained and secret communion with God do the springs of our true life lie. It would be hard to single out a need more plain and more importunate to-day than the recovery of the practice of meditation. It is not an art easy to acquire, and we have first to overcome the enormous handicap of our fear of being alone. We moderns have lived so constantly in public that there is nothing we are so much afraid of as solitude. And even then, when we have conquered our aversion to solitude, we have to begin our self-training in the art of purposeful meditation. Nowadays, we are indisposed to turn to the old masters of the art for instruction—the saints of the Middle Ages. But some day we shall rediscover the neglected wealth that is stored in the great classics of mediæval devotion. Meantime we must stumble along as best we can. For we are not habituated to the ether of the unseen and cannot see in its strange light. Here is the testimony of a modern who has made the great experiment, George Russell (A. E.), the Irish poet: "I felt as one who steps out of day into the colourless night of a cavern, and that was because I had suddenly reversed the habitual motions of life. We live normally seeing through the eyes, hearing through the ears,

[1] Matt. xiv. 23; Luke vi. 12, ix. 28; Mark i. 35; Luke v. 16.

stirred by the senses, moved by bodily powers, and receiving only such spiritual knowledge as may pass through a momentary purity of our being. On the mystic path we create our own light, and at first we struggle blind and baffled, seeing nothing, hearing nothing, unable to think, unable to imagine. We seem deserted, by dream, vision or inspiration, and our meditation barren altogether. But let us persist through weeks or months, and sooner or later that stupor disappears. Our faculties readjust themselves and do the work we will them to do. Never did they do their work so well. The dark caverns of the brain begin to grow luminous. We are creating our own light. By heat of will and aspiration we are transmuting what is gross in the subtle ethers through which the mind works. As the dark bar of metal begins to glow at first redly, and then at white heat, or as ice melts and is alternately fluid, vapour, gas, and at last a radiant energy, so do these ethers become purified and alchemically changed into luminous essences, and they make a new vesture for the soul and link us to mid-world or heavenward, where they too have their true home. How quick the mind is! How vivid is the imagination! We are lifted above the tumult of the body. The heat of the blood disappears below us. We draw nigher to ourselves. The heart longs for the hour of meditation and hurries to it. And when it comes we rise within ourselves as a diver too long under water rises to breathe the air, to see the light."

It is just like learning to swim. You go into the water and make the swimming motions. Nothing happens—you might as well be lead. But one day it happens, and you never can tell just how it has happened, that you swim a stroke or two. After that it is simply a matter of practice; and the day comes when you feel at home in the water and can do in it what you will. So it is here. For a time nothing happens; but if we persist we come to feel at home in this new medium, to be able to breathe its air, to see in its strange light; and at last, to see and share that abiding reality which is greater than anything that can be told about it, which awes us into silence but transfigures us into life.

Nevertheless, we should be greatly in error if we supposed that this is all that matters, or that this experience is the whole of life. When we become familiar with this inner world we are apt, like Peter, to say—when in an unexpected moment he had caught a glimpse of its wonder—"it is good for us to be here; let us build tabernacles."[1] But the Lord of life would not have us tabernacle in the secret place away from the fret and trouble of common life. And so Peter had, and so have we all, to foot it down into the valley where all the old intractable problems are still abroad. This is the orbit of this life—the path that lies between the mountain-tops which are visited by angels and the valleys which are infested by devils. And as you grow familiar with this mountain-path it

[1] Matt. xvii. 4.

shrinks, the mountain-top and the valley draw nearer to each other, ever nearer, until at last you find yourself standing on the mountain-top and in the valley at the same time. Then you can see heaven and earth in a blessed commingling, and behold, with Francis Thompson,

> "The traffic of Jacob's ladder
> Pitched between Heaven and Charing Cross,"

and

> "Christ walking on the waters,
> Not of Gennesaret, but Thames!"

And it does not stop there. One finds a world transformed. Things are not what once they seemed. You will find yourself loving what once you hated and hating what once you loved. You will see men playing the old games in the market place, being burnt up by the ancient fires of greed and gold, and you will wonder what on earth they are doing it for. But best of all you see a strange glory in the faces of men and women, and a new loveliness in the faces of the little children. And you will say to yourself, "I never saw the face of a man before, nor yet the smile of a little child. But whereas I once was blind, now I see. The name of this street is Bethel, the house of God, the gate of heaven." You will go about God's world and see the shekinah gleaming on the breast of every common man and every common face aflame with God.

CHAPTER III

Life and Things

(Matt. vi. 19-21; vii. 13-24; ix. 16-17; xx. 1-16; xxii. 15-22. Mark ii. 23-28. Luke x. 38-42; xviii. 1-8; xix. 41-44.)

I

"Narrow is the gate, and straitened the way that leadeth unto life."

WE have in recent years grown familiar with the use of the word *values* to describe the things that a man thinks worth living for; and his "scale of values" will be an arrangement of those things in the order of their desirability to him. Of such values we may say that they are broadly of two kinds: "temporal" or "material" and "spiritual." In Jesus' day there were plenty of people whose lives were governed by material values —fame, power, wealth and the like; and these same people are with us still. Their name is legion; and with a few exceptions, they are all of us. Here and there you may find an oddity who orders his life on the basis of spiritual values, and it is characteristic

of our age that such a man is regarded as a sort of idiot.

The distinction between spiritual and material values may be roughly described in this way—whether a man thinks that the things worth living for are within him or outside of him, whether he finds them in his own soul or in the world round about him. There can be no question at all as to the class of values that Jesus accepted and pursued. We have his word for it that a man's life does not consist in the abundance of the things that he possesses. "Few things are needful,"[1] as he told Martha. One does not need many things for the realization of life. It is not so much the amount of things that one may acquire but the mind that one brings to the things one has that makes for fullness of life. A modern writer has said that "life is a number of little things acutely realized," and it is precisely in this power of realization that the modern world is tragically poor. So poor are we that we can conceive of no way of getting the most out of life save by spreading the stuff of life out over a large number of things; and one needs only to look out upon the world to-day to realize where this leads. We taste many things lightly and nothing deeply. And so we are for ever compelled to extend the range over which we search out those things that are strong enough in taste to satisfy our *blasé* and exacting palates. The result is that in food, dress, and recreation we have almost become specialists in the

[1] Luke x. 41 (R.V. marg.).

grotesque, the bizarre and the prurient. What we bring with us to the enjoyment of life is but an appetite, and in consequence we end with an appetite. That endowment of imagination, insight, interpretation, spiritual possession, which we should bring with us to the experience of life and which could fill our life with the most exquisite joy in the appreciation of a few simple near-by things, that we lack. Jesus did not have to look far afield in his own day for an instance of this same poverty. The Pharisee was greedy of the praise of the town, because he had no resources within.[1]

It comes to this: If a man has little within, he seeks much without. If he has much within, he looks for little without. From Jesus' point of view, we are classified by what we are in ourselves; and we shall inevitably show without what we are within. This is a very trite reflection; yet it is not useless to remind oneself of it in an age when the principle of classification is not what a man is but what he has.

When Jesus said to Martha that "few things were needful or one thing," it was no occasional utterance, but sprang from his whole attitude to life. Too many things were, as he had frequently observed, an encumbrance, a handicap to real living. When he bade

[1] It should perhaps be said that while this book inevitably reflects the unfavourable view which the Gospels seem to hold of the Pharisees, there is other evidence which justifies a more generous judgment of them as a class. And in the Gospels we encounter some Pharisees who seem undeserving of the severe strictures passed upon the sect.

the rich young ruler sell his possessions and give them away, he was not putting his good faith to the proof.[1] He meant what he said literally, for he saw that the youth could make little headway in the pursuit of eternal life while he was carrying so much heavy baggage. The rich may enter the kingdom of heaven, but only with difficulty. It is of the nature of a miracle if they get there. Their riches stand in the way. St. Francis was essentially right when he preached the doctrine of poverty to his followers. The task of attaining eternal life requires so much of a man's attention that he simply cannot afford the distracting care of property. Nor can he without courting failure spread his life out over too many things. There is a broad road, says Jesus, that leads to destruction; it is a narrow way that leads to life.[2] When Jesus uses the words *broad* and *narrow* he does not mean them to be taken merely as synonyms for *vicious* and *virtuous*. He is simply warning men against spreading out life too thin and calling them to concentration. There is a narrowness which is death; there is no less a narrowness which is life. We may spend life to excess even upon things in themselves legitimate and even good; and if such priceless things as a hand or an eye stand in the way of our quest of life, we do well to get rid of them rather than to miss life altogether.[3] In a word, the life to which Jesus calls us cannot be realized without a rigorous simplicity of habit.

[1] Matt. xix. 21. [2] Matt. vii. 13-14. [3] Matt. v. 29-30.

Not that such a simplicity is valuable in itself. Its value lies in the fact that it enables us to give ourselves without distraction to the "one thing needful." Martha was in her hospitable way all fuss and business, and Mary was in her eyes just then an idle hussy who should be taken to task for wasting her time. It does (we may as well confess it) upset our modern notions of propriety that Jesus should take Mary's part against Martha[1]: and we give the story a rather forced theological interpretation that misses the point of it in order to save Jesus from the imputation of encouraging laziness. Yet what Jesus meant was that Martha was troubling her soul with an excess of business and that she was wasting her time in doing so. Mary had chosen the good part simply in being quiet and unpreoccupied so that she might listen and hear things that are not to be heard by people who live all the time amid the clatter of dishes. Mary was doing what would enable her to feel her soul. Many of us have not heard from our souls this many a day; we have had no word out of the unseen; for we have been living too intimately and deeply in the clamour of the street, amid the strident noises of this world of sense. We, too, are troubled about many things. Indeed, as Emerson said long ago, "things are in the saddle and ride us."

[1] Luke x. 38-42.

II

" Do men gather grapes of thorns or figs of thistles?"

One need only recall the frequency with which Jesus uses the word *heart* to remember how consistent was the emphasis which he laid upon the hidden and inward aspect of life. " Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. The good man out of his good treasure bringeth forth good things, and the evil man out of his evil treasure bringeth forth evil things."[1] This principle of *inwardness* governed the thought of Jesus throughout. It was the principle by which he judged conduct, institutions, and the whole varied human scene. It was his " acid test " for the acceptances and conventions on which the civilization of his day rested.

For instance, the customary moral judgment was passed upon a man's performance. He was " righteous " in the degree that he did certain things. There was a certain number of obligations which he was required to discharge, and if he discharged them *au pied de la lettre,* he stood morally irreproachable. But one of the plainest facts of Jesus' observation was that men might fully discharge the recognized moral obligations and yet be guilty of gross inhumanity, as for instance, devouring widows' houses.[2] He saw that it was possible to keep the letter of the law and at the

[1] Matt. xii. 34-35. [2] Mark xii. 40.

same time to deny its spirit, indeed, to deny the spirit by the very exactness with which one observed the letter. A man might harbour a lascivious thought, but if he abstained from the lewd act he was still within the law. Yet from any thoroughgoing and realistic moral standpoint, the evil thought is as evil as the evil act, and the principle that forbade the act logically forbade the thought.[1] Similarly the inner principle which forbids murder also forbids the anger that leads to the murder and the offence that provokes the anger.[2] Jesus' way was to track the evil deed to its lair in the evil heart. "Out of the heart come forth evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, railings."[3] The thing that mattered for moral judgment was what a man was in his heart, not what he did or failed to do, but what in his heart he would do—the clean heart rather than the washed hand, the right spirit rather than the right conduct.

The logic of this, Jesus carries out with characteristic thoroughness. In the parable of the unemployed,[4] the workmen who went into the vineyard at the eleventh hour received the same pay as those who had been at work all day. This might perhaps be adduced as good authority for the principle of the standard minimum wage, but the real point of the story is that the men were paid for the work they would have done if they had had it to do. Their willing-

[1] Matt. v. 28.
[2] Matt. v. 21-22.
[3] Matt. xv. 19.
[4] Matt. xx. 1-16.

ness to work was counted as work. "Why stand ye here all the day idle? Because no man hath hired us." The moral once more is that the ultimate moral judgment is passed on the spirit rather than on the achievement. This is the essential meaning of what is called Justification by Faith. Justification means being declared to be right with God, and therefore being treated by God as actually being right with Him. But this follows upon the act of faith, which is (to add another definition, this time Dr. W. P. du Bose's) "the disposition of our entire selves Godward." We are set right with God not by the tale of our performances but by a right disposition towards Him. The same principle is laid down by Jesus from another angle in another—one of the most beautiful—of his sayings: "He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward; and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward."[1] To receive a prophet or a good man in the name of a prophet or a good man is to receive him simply because he is a prophet or a good man and for no other reason. The man who does that does a very revealing thing. He shows the company he likes to keep, the store which he sets upon goodness, the thing that is in his heart, what he himself would be. He may lack the prophet's vision and his flaming utterance, yet if he give bed and board to a prophet just because he is a prophet, then he is accounted as

[1] Matt. x. 41.

belonging to that same company. He classifies himself, and God accepts the classification. "'Tis not what man Does that exalts him, but what man Would do," says Browning in *Saul;* and more fully in *Rabbi Ben Ezra*—

"Not on the vulgar mass
Called 'work,' must sentence pass,
Things done, that took the eye and had the price;
O'er which, from level stand,
The low world laid its hand,
Found straightway to its mind, could value in a trice:

But all, the world's coarse thumb
And finger failed to plumb,
So passed in making up the main account;
All instincts immature,
All purposes unsure,
That weighed not as his work, yet swelled the man's amount:

Thoughts hardly to be packed
Into a narrow act,
Fancies that broke through language and escaped;
All I could never be,
All, men ignored in me,
This, I was worth to God, whose wheel the pitcher shaped."

And on this showing our very failures become, as the same poet says, "the triumph's evidence for the fullness of days."

III

"Work not for the meat which perisheth, but for the meat which abideth unto eternal life."

A little hymn once popular at evangelistic meetings used to tell us that

> "Doing is a deadly thing,
> Doing ends in death;"

and the refrain went on:

> "Cast thy deadly doing down,
> Down at Jesus' feet;
> Stand in Him, in Him alone,
> Gloriously complete."

The hymn speaks a theological idiom which is now dead; yet its purpose was to warn us against the fallacy that salvation was a matter of performance. The hymn no longer appeals to us, not alone because its theology is obsolete but because we cannot understand the contempt for "doing" that it expresses. This is a generation which has spent itself in doing. We have enthroned the deed and the act. "The higher man of to-day," said Sir Oliver Lodge some

years ago, "is not worrying about his sins. His business is to be up and doing." This is the modern doctrine of righteousness. The busier a man is, the holier he is. The more he does, the more righteous he becomes. Industry and efficiency have become the hall-marks of holiness.

It would take us too far afield to inquire how this has come about. It has to do with our particular type of civilization, and especially with our modern doctrine of business. The modern world has been deeply immersed in the exploitation of its natural resources and by reason of the great development of mechanical invention has done this to an extent and on a scale hitherto unknown. Its entire aim and its main interest have been in the direction of energy to production. The result is that business has gained an unquestioned ascendancy over life.

Work is simply human activity directed to the business of sustaining life;[1] and commerce is at bottom simply an organization of the processes whereby society is provided with food, clothing, shelter, heat and light. That is to say Industry and Commerce have to do with the material or "economic" aspect of life. The modern trouble is that the economic interest is enthroned over life; nations are even governed in the interest of their commerce. But com-

[1] Of course, there is "work" that is not immediately directed to the sustaining of life; but the work of what we call the "working-classes" is so directed; and it is well to remember in this connection that it consists chiefly in large-scale routine-production by machinery.

merce was made for man and not man for commerce. Nor was it made for man in the sense of being an opportunity for self-aggrandizement, for making money. It was ordained to be a co-operation in the service of life. But to-day it is on the throne. The man is lost in the merchant or in the merchandise. Yet the relation of the economic end of life to the rest of life is no more than the relation of the kitchen to the rest of the home. It is essential, necessary, yet strictly subordinate. We reach the real business of life when we are through with the business of making and eating bread. This does not imply contempt of the kitchen. Properly understood, the kitchen is holy ground, full (as Brother Lawrence found it) of intimations of God. But our trouble is that we live in the kitchen all the time. We never get away from it. The clatter of dishes follows us into our sleep. It is business, business, without remission. And then the kitchen ceases to be holy ground; for what holiness it has derives from the service it was meant to render to the rest of life. Its concern is for the physical framework of life; it is therefore an integral part of the scheme of life. But it becomes a thieves' kitchen when it sets up to be the whole of life or asserts an ascendancy over the rest of life. Money and merchandise are holy things when they minister to life: they are wholly evil things when they become masters of life.

The modern demand for a shorter working day springs from a root far deeper than a mere disinclina-

tion to work. It is a genuine even if ill-expressed craving for time to live, an endeavour to set work in a truer relation to the business of life as a whole. It is a revolt from the doctrine that man lives for production first. And while it is true that Jesus would not sympathize with the tone in which the demand for a shorter working day is frequently made, or with the method by which it is sometimes proposed to secure it, it is no less true that he would sympathize with the essence of the demand. One may even deduce from his description of the "hireling"[1] that he would consider the wage-system demoralizing; and from the Parable of the Unemployed[2] that he did not believe in payment by time or by piece-work. But while we hear from Jesus no echo of the old Hebrew idea that work was a curse, neither do we hear anything about the "dignity" or the "sanctity" of labour. Jesus seems to take work, as he takes many other things, for granted, simply as a part of the day's business; and if we may judge from the story of Mary and Martha, not the most important part of the day's business. There are other things of more moment to attend to.

Concerning these other things it will be enough for our immediate purpose to note that they were not commodities for the market. They were rather things in which life expressed itself because it must, without thought for their use or their value. Nor did they consist in that "charity" to which our vestigial social sense bids us turn when we desist awhile from the

[1] John x. 12. [2] Matt. xx. 1-16.

production of wealth. Indeed for such "charity" as this Jesus had little use—a pity defiled by pride, a compassion muddied by contempt. And to our test of value—What is the use of it? or, Does it pay?—Jesus was an entire stranger. His test was "What is it the expression of?" and whatever it was, if it was the expression of a beautiful thought or of a loving heart, it was worth doing for its own sake, without any after-thought. When the woman poured her "exceeding precious ointment"[1] on Jesus in the house of Simon the leper, the disciples were scandalized by the waste. The ointment, they said, might be sold for much and given to the poor. But Jesus turns their indignation aside with a gentle humorous word, intending them to understand that the woman had done a deed of love which had its virtue in itself. She had done a beautiful thing which was worth doing for what it was. There is room for beauty as well as for use in life.

There are two kinds of work to be done in the world. The first is the class of works of *necessity and utility*. Since the Industrial Revolution, the production of articles of necessity and use has been more and more an affair of machinery; and the proper view of machinery is that it is a dispensation of Providence (or if you will, a product of evolution) by which men are intended to produce speedily and abundantly the things concerning which the primary considerations are usefulness, quality and sufficiency. Those who

[1] Matt. xxvi. 6-13.

would " scrap " the machine industry appear to miss the point of it. That it has been subordinated to mere profit-making and consequently has turned rather to the degradation of life is due to nothing inherently evil in it. When we are intelligent enough to divert the use of machinery from private profit to public service, the labour of producing such utilities and necessities as are indispensable to the generous maintenance of the physical life of the community will be very greatly lessened in volume. In this labour, every member of the community (with a few exceptions, e.g. the doctor) should take his share, just as he takes his share in jury-duty. Let us call this a man's *trade*. It is idle to pretend that the highly-specialized machine industry can be made a source of joy for the worker; it is incurably monotonous. But a certain amount of routine is undoubtedly good for ordinary human nature. At present, however, industrial routine is the *rule* for the work-life of the vast multitude of our fellows. When we have substituted the rule of production for need and use for production for profit, and have quickened a sense of social obligation that will require every individual to take his part in routine-production, no man will need to spend all the day and every day in monotonous and dehumanizing mechanical toil.

The second class is works of *beauty* (or, if we call the first-class works of *routine-production*, we may call the second-class works of *creation*, which is perhaps better). These are works of free and original

self-expression in any medium. Let us call this a man's *vocation*.

Let it not be supposed, however, that the second class has a greater sanctity than the first. Both works of utility and works of beauty may be and should be sacramental and done "as unto the Lord." Yet it remains to be said that the relation of the first to the second is that of the foundation to the rest of the building. There is, of course, a borderland between the two classes, e.g., the making of certain articles of clothing, furniture, building, home-making, where works of utility may be also works of beauty, and where a man's trade and his vocation are one.

But, generally, in the future organization of Society, we shall approximate more to the practice of the idea: To every man his "trade" and his "vocation." (St. Paul, by the way, had the "trade" of a tent-maker and the "vocation" of an apostle.) To me at least it seems clear that the proper development of life requires a reduction of the former to the lowest point consistent with sufficiency and high quality of the provision for material need, with the consequent expansion of the margin of life available for the expression of whatever impulses of original creation may dwell in men.

But we shall look in vain for such an order of life so long as we consent to the view that wealth is the measure of life. While we continue to believe that a man's life consists in the number of the things he possesses and that a nation's prosperity is to be

measured by its invested capital and its rates of interest, we shall not live in any real sense. We shall go on sacrificing the whole to the part, the best of life to the least thing in life. For this there is no remedy except that the material values shall be expelled from men's hearts by the coming of that inward kingdom of God which is, as St. Paul says, "not eating and drinking but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost."[1]

IV

"The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath."

Life first—this, then, was the view of Jesus. We may take it that he regarded life as an integral thing, continuous and indivisible, reaching its supreme embodiment in man, who in his turn perfectly realizes himself in that way of life that Jesus calls the kingdom of heaven. But man has an inveterate tendency to subordinate life to institutions; and one of the chief elements in Jesus' teaching and actions was his consistent protest against this reversal of values. Men, for instance, rated the sanctity of the Sabbath above human need; and in the face of this perversity Jesus laid down a principle with applications far wider than

[1] Rom. xiv. 17.

the specific case which evoked it. "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath."

Jesus has been called the greatest of the humanists; by which is meant that he is the greatest of those who in all the ages have affirmed the sovereignty of the essential man over institutions and systems. The history of humanism has yet to be written; but when it is written it will be a great story. It will tell us, for instance, of that great humanist Daniel who proclaimed the doom of those brute imperialisms of the ancient world that crushed manhood and subordinated it to their own purposes. It will recall the humanists in the period before the Reformation who protested against the subjection of the human reason to the arid doctrinal system and method of the mediæval Schoolmen. Lately the word emerged—for a moment—as a philosophical protest against the exaltation of reason (which is but one among the faculties with which men are endowed), in the accepted philosophies of the time. The note that is common to humanism in whatever age we encounter it is that it emphasizes the integrity and sovereignty of human personality and protests against its subordination to either a part of itself or to anything that it has itself made, against the rule of the institution, whether it be church or state, a creed or a law or a custom. The gospel of the humanist is the application of the principle which Jesus laid down with reference to the Sabbath to every institution, religious or political, to every system, ethical, economic or intellectual, to

every movement or organization in the whole world: *Life first.*

We, in our time, have heard and are hearing a good deal about the rights of property. But Jesus would have said that property had no more precedence than the Sabbath over humanity. But the popular doctrine of property rights gives to them a sacrosanctity and an absoluteness which is alleged to render them immune from interference by any authority. But the doctrine of the sanctity of property does not derive from Sinai, still less from eternity. It is indeed a comparatively modern doctrine. But one might reasonably gather from certain recent discussions that the doctrine of property-rights was the divinely appointed rock of the social order, and that it is our great and sacred business to conserve it at all costs. "The value of our investments," said Mr. Roger Babson[1] in his *Report* (January, 1920), "depends not upon the strength of our banks as upon the strength of our churches. . . . The religion of the community is the bulwark of our investments." Religion should, of course, make men peaceable and honest: it should produce communities in which the decencies and liberties of life are respected. But it is a novel and startling doctrine that religion, the life of the soul, should be encouraged because it secures investments. Here

[1] Mr. Roger Babson is a well-known American statistician who publishes monthly reports upon business and industrial conditions. Recently he has elaborated his views upon the relation of religion and business in two books: *The Essentials of Prosperity,* and *Religion and Business.* The general drift of his thought may be gathered from the quotation given above.

is a Cæsar who requires not only the things that are Cæsar's, but also the things that are God's. The one incident in the Gospels which appears to have a bearing upon the subject is the story of the young man who was advised to sell out his investments and to give the proceeds to the poor.[1] The business of religion is not to secure a man's investments, but to secure the man himself, and if necessary to secure him against his investments. At any rate it is not much of a religion that a man has if the security of his investments keeps him awake o' nights.

This, however, does not mean that Jesus would condemn property in itself. It appears to be essential to a man's freedom and growth that he should own, that is, have absolute control over a certain number of things. But a point comes when possession becomes an obsession and riches an encumbrance. The care of them involves an expenditure of life, and what was meant to minister to life imposes a toll upon life. That which should be a source of freedom becomes a fetter, and the fear of loss becomes a tyrannous and wasteful torture. That is why Jesus speaks so doubtfully of the rich man's chances of the kingdom of heaven.

But to-day the evil of property does not lie in its excess alone. To this must be added certain other considerations. We have already referred to the view that is held by some people that property is in some sort to be regarded as a sanctity the maintenance of

[1] Matt. xix. 21.

which is a kind of charge upon religion. But in addition to this is the fact that to-day property is chiefly held in the form of invested capital, and from this there results two grave conditions. The first is that it invests the property-owner with a certain power over the life and labour of other men. Capital means, when the matter is reduced to its lowest terms, the ownership of tools; and it is plain that as, especially in these days of large-scale machine production, the ownership of the tools is possible only where there are large aggregations of wealth, capital and they who hold it are in a position of advantage over those who have nothing of their own save the labour of which they are capable. Property as capital does invest the possessor with an undoubted power and authority over other men; and as it is a commonplace that wealth is largely concentrated in comparatively few hands there has been evolved in our days a sort of informal economic oligarchy the power of which has not yet been regulated consistently with the democratic ideal. Moreover, the practice of investment in companies and corporations has extended the distribution of capital to a large number of people, who have as a rule no sense of responsibility for the undertaking in which they are sharers, and who are content to receive their dividends without acknowledging any personal obligation to acquaint themselves with the processes and conditions which produce those dividends. Property is disburdened of responsibility.

But further, property has come to be in our time

the principle of social classification. We are divided between the *Haves* and the *Have-nots;* and though it would be impossible to draw a hard and fast frontier-line between the two classes, there can be no doubt of the general character of the stratification. And quite apart from the fact that this implies that the labours of the one class are largely subordinated to the maintenance and enrichment of the other, property has become the main occasion of the social schism of our time and the chief obstacle in the way of that solidarity which we shall presently see was so essential an aim in the mind of Jesus.

In a word, property has gained an unquestionable ascendancy over life. The true position has been reversed. For property, after all, was made for man and not man for property.

In Jesus' day, however, the institution of property raised none of the acute problems that it raises to-day. But there were other institutions that raised problems of their own. The political order under which the Jew lived was an alien thing imposed from without, and he only respected it under the compulsion of fear. He longed and was continually planning for its overthrow. For the Pharisee the problem was not so simple as it was for the ordinary Jew. The Pharisee was concerned for another institution, the religious institution; and his problem was that of threading a way between his hatred for the Roman and his desire for the overthrow of the empire on the one hand and his fear for the church on the other. Hitherto the

Romans had taken up an attitude of toleration toward the religious institution; but they were ruthless masters when they were thwarted. An unsuccessful revolt countenanced by the religious leaders might lead to rough handling of the church. So that the question which the Pharisees once propounded to Jesus was a familiar one to themselves.[1] They had often asked themselves whether it was right to pay taxes to their heathen lords; and they had answered that it was expedient to pay the taxes in the interests of a quiet life. But they did not expect that Jesus would take up so compromised a position, for they did not imagine that he being a Jew would love the Roman any more than they did; and moreover he had no special interests to consider.

Jesus, however, looked at the matter from an unexpected angle. He asked for a piece of current coin, and when some person in the company produced a Roman *denarius* from the folds of his garment, Jesus asked whose imprint it bore. The answer was, of course, inevitable. Very well, then, says Jesus in effect, the position is that if you accept Cæsar's currency with its symbols of Cæsar's authority, you should pay Cæsar what you thereby acknowledge to be his due. But you should also give to God what you acknowledge is due to God. This placed the Pharisees in a dilemma; for they no doubt believed that the emancipation of the Chosen People of God from an alien thraldom was a religious duty. In fact,

[1] Matt. xxii. 17-21.

Jesus simply restated their own problem to them and convicted them of compromise. But in stating the matter as he did Jesus was laying down a principle which is of universal application. They that acknowledge Cæsar have a duty to Cæsar, but one's duty to Cæsar is not necessarily one's duty to God. This is the distinction well expressed in Lowell's lines,

> "Better rot beneath the sod,
> Than be true to Church and State,
> While we are doubly false to God."

In recent times, the state, which is the community organized for the purposes of government, has come to be regarded as a divine institution possessing an inexpugnable right to dispose of the persons of its individual members, and "Give to Cæsar what is Cæsar's" is quoted in support of the doctrine. We cannot here undertake a discussion of the nature and the authority of the state: nor are we interested at the moment in anything but what Jesus would probably have said to the modern claim of the state. Once more we can safely infer his attitude. The state, he would say, exists for man, and not man for the state. The state was made not in order to lord it over life but to serve the ends of life; and its title to respect and obedience rests upon the adequacy with which it fulfils this office. St. Paul tells us that the civil magistrate holds his commission from God;[1] but he was a

[1] Rom. xiii. 1-4.

Roman citizen and for the most part he found the Empire a help rather than a hindrance. Moreover, in those days the Empire practised a sort of religious toleration—the era of Cæsar-worship had not yet fully arrived. But the writer of the Book of Revelation did not share Paul's respect for the state. To him it was the "scarlet woman" who was "drunken with the blood of the saints and the blood of the martyrs of Jesus."[1] It is sometimes said that it is the business of government to preserve order—yet it is only so to preserve order as to give the largest margin of freedom for the expression of life. And that is the test by which its title to the respect of its members stands or falls.

It does not appear that Jesus found the Roman government much in his way. Certainly he does not say so. Yet it cannot be doubted that it represented to him an order which must pass away, one, so to speak, of the old wine-skins. But he did not see it passing away by the method which some of his countrymen favoured. Indeed, he foresaw that to fight the Romans with their own weapons meant destruction and death. "He that takes the sword shall perish by the sword."[2] He saw that the logic of his countrymen's policy would lead to what it ultimately did lead, the destruction of Jerusalem and the final extinction of what remained of the Jewish state. It was for this reason that he wept over the city that did not "know the things that belonged to its peace."[3]

[1] Rev. xvii. 6. [2] Matt. xxvi. 52. [3] Luke xix. 42.

And in that moment when the Jews rejected Jesus and chose Barabbas, the rebel leader who for "insurrection" had been cast into prison, they made their final and fatal choice.[1] The attempt to overthrow political institutions by violence seemed to him to be tragic folly.

Jesus was tender to old garments and old wine-skins.[2] He would not have a worse rent made in the old garment by patching it with a piece of undressed cloth; nor would he have the old wine-skins perish by putting new wine into them. He would leave them alone in their decay; time would do the rest. It was his business to quicken a new life which would flow outside the old channels, leaving the old channels to dry up and crumble away. The new life was to function outside the old institutions, and the old institutions, having no function left, would by and by perish of atrophy. Yet while it was wasteful to put the new wine in the old wine-skins, it was equally wasteful to have no wine-skins at all. The new life must have its own organ, its own channel. So when Jesus abandoned his hope of carrying out his mission through the existing religious institutions, he formed a new society in which the new life could function independently of both the political and the ecclesiastical systems. As a matter of history, the original society of twelve grew, in spite of opposition and persecution, until it became necessary for the empire to come to terms with it. But the agreement which the church

[1] Luke xxiii. 25. [2] Matt. ix. 16-17.

made with the empire was a capital blunder from which it has never recovered. It was, of course, a departure from the plan of Jesus. The new life was mated with the old way of the world, and the church was untrue to its own genius when it made its compromise with Constantine (about A.D. 325). True, the new life must have degenerated a good deal before it could even consider such a compromise : yet sufficient virtue still remained in it to make it the most considerable fact in the world at the time.

It would, however, be a mistake to suppose that Jesus was indifferent to politics—that is, to politics in its larger sense of the organization and economy of the common life. And it would be another mistake to suppose that Christianity has nothing to do with politics. The growth of the modern democratic ideal may not have originated with Jesus, but it has undoubtedly received its most powerful endorsement from Jesus' doctrine of the infinite and, therefore, equal value of every living soul. For democracy ideally enthrones the essential man, not a particular man, or a particular group of men. But it does not follow that we have achieved democracy when we have established a universal franchise, representative government and majority rule. In practice such a form of government may be as a recent writer has said, " government of the people by the prosperous for the prosperous,"[1] which, whatever else it may be, is certainly not democracy. Democracy is, after all, some-

[1] *Metropolitan Magazine* (New York), Editorial, August, 1920.

thing more than a political form. It must cover the whole of life. Its logic must, for instance, be carried through into the economic region. But even then democracy cannot live except it be sustained by whatever is contained in the saying that we are members one of another, and in the acceptance and practice of its law of mutual service. It is not a political doctrine so much as a way of life. But the final test of a political system, whether it be called democratic or by whatever other name, is whether it ministers to the freedom and abundance of life. And it would be difficult to find a government in the world that could stand this test. The best we can say is that some are not so bad as others.

V

" Ye leave the commandment of God, and hold fast the tradition of men . . . making the word of God void by your tradition."

It was chiefly in the religious sphere that Jesus found the institution most securely enthroned over the life that it was intended to serve.

We have already observed that Jesus originally designed to usher in the new order of life on the crest of a religious revival within the existing religious institutions. But his synagogue ministry met with considerable opposition which, after a time, came to a

climax over the healing of the man with the withered hand on the sabbath day. The scribes and Pharisees were "filled with madness."[1] And Jesus looked upon them with anger, "being grieved at the hardening of their heart."[2] He saw that it was an impossible situation; and on that day he left the synagogue never (except upon one doubtful occasion) to enter it any more. Henceforth his work would lie outside and the next stage of his ministry was chiefly spent in laying down the foundations of the new society in and through which the new life was to function and grow into that single order of life which would supersede both the state and the church that then were.

The trouble that had overtaken the ecclesiastical system of the Jews is recurrent in the history of religious institutions—the hardening of religious life into a rigid system of belief and conduct. Jewish religion gathered around the Law, and the observance of the Law was the whole duty of man. But unless the meaning of law is kept steadily in mind, fidelity in the observance of it may become an arrest of life. Law is, of course, the endeavour to define right conduct, but it is never more than a definition of the *minimum* of moral obligation. Yet our tendency is to regard it as stating the total of human obligation, and whatever is beyond law is a work of supererogation, a work of extra merit, so to speak; and whatever the law does not forbid comes to be counted as permissible. It was, therefore, possible to observe the

[1] Luke vi. 11. [2] Mark iii. 5.

letter of the law and yet be guilty of gross breaches of its spirit. It was with this that Jesus charged the Pharisees and the scribes: "Ye tithe mint and anise and cummin, and have left undone the weightier matters of the law, judgment, and mercy and faith."[1] It was out of this temper that the controversy about the sabbath grew. The current legalism exalted the sabbath over human need. Whereupon Jesus answered them: "What man shall there be of you that shall have one sheep, and if this fall into a pit on the sabbath day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift it out? How much more then is a man of more value than a sheep? Wherefore it is lawful to do good on the sabbath day."[2]

We can see, therefore, why Jesus said to his disciples: "Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and the Pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven."[3] Jesus had no quarrel with the Law, only with the official interpretation of it. He declared that he had indeed come to fulfil the Law. For the Law was good so far as it went. But no law will ever succeed in being so extensive and so detailed that it can cover all the contingencies that arise in life. Jesus, with his consistent emphasis upon the inward, showed how the spirit of the Law as it was expressed in certain commandments went far beyond the scope of the commandments. This is what he does in the Fifth Chapter of Matthew. He takes one after another of the specific legal injunc-

[1] Matt. xxiii. 23. [2] Matt. xii. 11-12. [3] Matt. v. 20.

tions with which his hearers were familiar and shows how the spirit that was embodied in the injunction went out far beyond the injunction. The spirit which forbade the adulterous thought forbade the adulterous act.[1] The spirit which imposed a limit upon revenge led logically to a forbidding of retaliation, and carried to its natural conclusion, required that the injured person should seek to reconcile the offender by rendering him service along the very line of his offence. "Whosoever shall compel thee to go with him one mile"—that is, if a Roman officer commandeers you to carry his baggage for a mile—"go with him twain."[2]

Right conduct is the expression of a right spirit. And if one has this spirit, says Jesus, there is no limit that can be assigned to his well-doing. In such conduct there is a creative quality. By being true to itself through everything, it is forever outdoing its own best. And the final objection to legalism—this insistence upon the letter of the law—is that it kills the original and creative quality in goodness. It reduces goodness to a rule. Both to the good and the evil it says, Thus far shalt thou go. And it looks with equal hostility both upon him who transgresses the law and upon him who transcends it.

With dogma as we know it, Jesus was not apparently troubled. But that was because the Jew had not been a thinker like the Greek. It is true that he had exercised a good deal of ingenuity in the inter-

[1] Matt. v. 27. [2] Matt. v. 38-41.

pretation and application of the Law; and a great body of legal lore had grown in the course of the years. And to this supplementary matter the scribe and the Pharisee attached as much importance as to the Law itself. It was to this accretion to the text of the Law that Jesus was alluding when he spoke of "the tradition of men"; and the attitude to it was in its own sphere precisely that which in the region of religious truth we call dogmatism. The result of both is the same. And, indeed, the objection to both is the same. It is that they ascribe a quality of absoluteness and finality to a definition of something that cannot from the nature of the case be fully defined, and least of all can be *finally* defined. A definition, whether it be a doctrine, a creed, what you will, is not in itself objectionable. It may, properly used, be a fruitful instrument for the guiding and the unfolding of the religious life. When it is regarded as a point to set out from and not to stop at, a starting place and not a terminal, then it has its uses. But we tend to regard it as final, as a line which every man must toe. But religious experience cannot be captured into a phrase and held within a doctrinal system: it is continually outstripping the definition. When it does not do so, it is either stagnant or shrinking. If it is a growing thing, it "breaks through language and escapes." As Coventry Patmore has said:

> "In divinity and love
> What's best worth saying can't be said."

The living truth is always greater than anything that we can say about it. Dogma is a fingerpost which indicates the way in which religious experience is travelling; but it becomes a prison for the soul and an arrest of life when it is assumed to be the final truth of things.

VI

"Thy kingdom come on earth . . . as is heaven."

Let it not be supposed that because Jesus emphasized the kingdom within that he despised the world without and that he was in any sense separating himself from it. One may live outside the conventional institutions without forsaking the world of men, as Jesus did. What the vision of the kingdom does for us is to give us a revaluation of the world. Take money, for instance. The modern world has loved money without respecting it. Money is a symbol of value; and value is created by the expenditure of the priceless stuff of life. A coin is so much minted life, a holy thing, not to be handled lightly or irreverently. It is a sacramental thing, like the bread and wine of the Communion, the outward and visible sign of life fruitfully expended. That is why a bank should be as a temple and the banker a priest, a man who handles holy things. The storekeeper's merchandise is sacramental stuff, congealed life. His store should be a temple, and the man who sells shoddy goods defiles the temple as much as did the hucksters and money-

changers in the Temple in Jerusalem long ago. To the man in whom the Kingdom has come, the world and all that's in it is sacramental. Not only does he find "sermons in stones and books in the running brooks," not only does he see "every common bush aflame with God," but he will go to the commonest affair of daily business as to an act of worship; he will go to the market-place as to the Holiest of All, he will tread every familiar spot with unshod feet, and he will look in the deep of men's eyes and see God there.

Nor will this be all. With it will go a new perception of the possibilities of the world. William Blake is most widely known through the stanza in which he says:

> "I will not cease from mental strife,
> Nor shall my sword rust in my hand,
> Till we have built Jerusalem
> In England's green and pleasant land."

That same passion of creation and redemption comes to every man who has seen the kingdom of God. Mr. G. K. Chesterton says somewhere that if we want to save Pimlico, we must hate Pimlico and love Pimlico at the same time—hate it for the ugliness that it is, love it for the loveliness that it may be. And ever beneath the crust of ugliness there is a hidden beauty waiting to be revealed. St. Paul speaks of the creation waiting for the revealing of the sons of God, waiting to be delivered from the bondage of corruption into

what the sons of God see that it may be. The redeeming of the world halts because we do not see it with the eyes of the sons of God; the passion for souls is dead within us because we do not see in the faces of the sons of men the face of the Son of Man. But this will be no longer so when we have gained that inner illumination which enables us to see through the husk to the kernel, through the outward to the inward, through the flesh to the spirit. We shall discover in the men round about us that imperishable image of God, which, broken and defiled though it be, is yet the loveliest thing on earth to him who has the eyes to see it. Then will come a great tide of compassion and longing for the gathering in, the mending, and the cleansing of this broken and disordered beauty, that thrill of love which gives us no peace until we become the bondsmen of God for the redeeming of this world of man. We shall know something of the great passion which Frederic Myers has rightly read into St. Paul:

"Only as souls I see the folk thereunder,
Bound who should conquer, slaves who should be kings,
Hearing their one hope with an empty wonder,
Sadly contented with a show of things. . . .

Then with a thrill the intolerable craving
Shivers throughout me like a trumpet call—
O to save these, to perish for their saving,
Die for their life, be offered for them all!"

VII

" A certain woman lifted up her voice and said unto him: Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the breasts which thou didst suck! But he said: Yea rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God and keep it."

Jesus' relations with his family were apparently somewhat difficult. They did not understand him, and even went so far as to doubt his sanity.[1] But it would be to go beyond the facts to say that there was any resentment in Jesus' attitude to them. What had happened was that Jesus had entered upon a new kind of relation that transcended the old. The relation of physical kinship was superseded by one of spiritual kinship. " He stretched forth his hands toward his disciples and said, Behold my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, he is my brother and sister and mother."[2]

Upon the priority of the new relation in the kingdom Jesus was emphatic. The man who wanted to go home to bury his father was told to " let the dead bury the dead; but go thou and preach the kingdom."[3] And the other man who desired to " bid farewell to them that are at home in my house "[4] was told that " no man having put his hand to the plough and

[1] Mark iii. 21.
[2] Matt. xii. 49-50.
[3] Matt. viii. 22.
[4] Luke ix. 62.

looking back is fit for the kingdom of God." The saying: "If any man cometh unto me and hateth not his own father and mother and wife and children and brethren and sisters and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple," is not so harsh as it sounds. The word *hate* renders an Aramaic word which is relative. If A loves B better than he loves C he may be said in Aramaic to *hate* C. Jesus is not asking that men should discard their kinsfolk, but he quite definitely claims for himself and for the kingdom a priority over them.

There is, of course, nothing very shocking in this. We agree that a man's nation under certain conditions comes before his family, and Jesus is only insisting that there are relations between men higher than those of the home. Indeed, all relationships that have a purely physical basis—family, nation, locality, race—he regards as inferior and less authoritative than the new relation established between them "that hear the word of God and keep it." The bonds of the kingdom take precedence over all other bonds whatsoever. Jesus was creating a new family on the basis of a spiritual kinship which rendered all other kinships secondary.

We shall see later how large a part the sense of human solidarity played in the mind of Jesus. The physical solidarity of the race is already a fact; but just because it was physical—and only physical—it was disrupted in all sorts of ways. Family feuds, tribal wars, national disputes—the world has been

always full of these things, although God had, as St. Paul said, "made of one blood all nations of men." Men tend to group themselves in small units, based upon proximity of physical relation, and to assert their group-consciousness against each other. And all the promise that was implied in the physical solidarity of man was being frustrated by spiritual disintegration and moral disharmony. But in the kingdom of God, a spiritual and moral content was to be added to this solidarity. It was to be transformed from a physical to a spiritual and moral fact. The local and sectional affections and affinities of men were to be enlarged into a relation which would be generous enough to embrace all men. The family, the tribe, the nation—all were to be displaced by the kingdom of God; and within the kingdom men would stand in a relation to one another deeper, more intimate, more exacting than any other human relation could be.

But it does not at all follow that the new relation abrogates the old ones. On the contrary, Jesus cared for his mother to the end. The apparently harsh word that he spoke to her at the Cana marriage is behind the translation only a mode of speech and implies no feeling of any kind. He had a thought for his mother in his deepest anguish. The truth is that we do not know the possibilities of our human affection until they are baptized into the kingdom. None of us love each other as we might until we love the kingdom of God more. And there is no friendship like that of those who are first friends of Jesus. It is a matter of

realization once more. We do not realize the wealth and the beauty of our human affections until they have been brought within the kingdom of God.

"Lord," said Peter one day, "we have left all and followed thee. What shall we therefore have?" Jesus' answer was, "Every one that hath left houses or brethren or sisters or father or mother or children or lands for my name's sake shall receive a hundredfold, and shall inherit eternal life."[1] Which means that the relations of men within the kingdom are a sort of communism of affection, and seemingly also of goods. Here we are all each other's fathers and mothers and children; and we are free of each other's homes and lands. It is significant that the disciples, when they faced the business of life after Jesus had left them, should have had "all things in common"; and that periods of spiritual quickening have been accompanied by communistic experiments. But it springs from the new sense of unity and togetherness which is born of a vision, however faint, of the kingdom; and the communism of goods is an attempt to give a sacramental expression to the communism of affection. It is well to remember that the kingdom of God is a world-wide communism of the spirit; and when we have reached that point we shall discover that we have also a communism of everything else.

We observe here what we shall have occasion to observe again that Jesus identifies a relation to himself as identical with a relation to the kingdom. What

[1] Matt. xix. 29.

this implies for our understanding of Jesus himself we shall have to consider at a later point. But it is probable that Jesus was partly acting upon the feeling that he was dealing with people for whom the idea of the kingdom was too abstract and inapprehensible, and for whom it had to be translated into terms of a personal relation. Jesus looked upon himself as the sacrament of the kingdom, and his "Come unto me" was a simplified and more concrete form of an invitation to enter the kingdom of God. He was dealing with minds for whom truth had to be "embodied in a tale" and the spirit conveyed through a symbol. And he himself was the symbol of the kingdom. But this suggests something more. In outward expression and practice, the kingdom is an affair of personal relationships. And our relations to each other are to be fashioned upon our fundamental relationship to Jesus. "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these, ye have done it unto me."[1] We are to treat each other as we would treat Jesus. We are far from perceiving that the entire problem of the common life is a matter of personal relations. What we call the social problem is all involved in the problem between you and me. Everything begins there. I had some years ago to pay occasional visits to a home in which all the members were of a somewhat bitter and critical habit of speech and usually they exercised this temper upon each other. But there was one thing upon which they were all agreed—*they all hated the people next*

[1] Matt. xxv. 40.

door. And so it is that our personal dislikes are enlarged into group antagonisms and our group antagonisms sharpen into all kinds of conflict and war. And over against this disruptive temper Jesus calls for a new type and quality of mutual relation between men. But this new relation is not something one may put on at will as one might put on a different garment. It is something that comes of itself when men have seen the true good of life in a vision of the kingdom. Not that it comes at once in all its perfection. It has to grow by practice and expression; and it has a stiff fight against our residual self-love. But it is the natural firstfruits of the kingdom in a man's life, as it is also the only hope of the world.

CHAPTER IV

Right and Wrong

(Matt. v. 14-15; xviii. 21-35; xxi. 33-44; xxv. 21-46; Luke x. 25-37; xii. 13-15; xiii. 1-5; xv. 11-32; xxii. 24-27.)

I

"The stone which the builders rejected, the same was made head of the corner . . . and he that falleth upon this stone shall be broken to pieces; but on whomsoever it shall fall it shall scatter him as dust."

THE man who first saw that "honesty is the best policy" had made a great discovery. He had not merely formulated a safe maxim of conduct; he had discovered that he lived in a moral universe, a universe so made that it does not pay to be dishonest in it. No doubt the man had had his fingers burned in a piece of crooked business, but that takes nothing away from the greatness of his discovery. It is also true that he had not found out all there was to be found out about the moral basis of the universe. Still it was a considerable thing to have found that it had a moral character at all.

In a sense, mankind has been making that same discovery all through its history. Human nature is so constituted that its growth and happiness depend upon its acting in a certain way, and in the course of the ages men have discovered some of the things that constitute that way. The discovery has been made in the business of living and through the experience of living together. Men saw that if they were to make the best of themselves and of each other, there were certain things that they had to agree to do, and other things that they had to agree to abstain from doing. These were their *mores*, which is the Latin word for customs. And these *mores* were in the course of time collected and systematized in codes of law, like those of Hammurabi and Moses. It was, however, evident that these *mores* were not all on the same footing of authority and importance, and little by little men saw that among the mass of *mores* there was a small core which carried with it an authority of a different quality from the rest. It had a seemingly absolute and universal character, and the word *mores* came to be associated with this body of absolute and uncontingent obligations. So that when we speak of *morality* it is of these obligations that we are thinking as contrasted with those things that are merely customary and permissive.

Now it is perfectly true that amid the complexities of human life men may differ in their view of the application of these obligations to particular cases, and the borderline between right and wrong is apt to be

blurred. Yet, however men may differ about the rightness or wrongness of particular acts, the faculty which distinguishes between the quality of rightness and the quality of wrongness is a universal thing. This is something original, inherent, instinctive in human nature. It may be crude and may want much education. But it is there, a something within us, which speaks in the imperative mood with an accent not our own.

Rightly or wrongly men have supposed this to be the voice of God within them. Even though those people be right who hold that conscience is a product of evolution, it does not necessarily follow that it is any less the voice of God on that account. However we came by it, we have learnt from experience that it is the reflection within us of the moral order of the universe of which we are part. And the religious interpretation of this moral order and of its counterpart within the soul is that it is an expression of the moral nature of God.

Now, whatever view we may take of the person of Jesus, we may at least go so far as to say that he lived in so great an intimacy with God, and therefore presumably in so close moral harmony with God, that whatever he has to say upon this particular subject is entitled to be heard with respect. And, indeed, there are few people who would dispute that what he was even more than what he said furnishes us with the surest clue to the moral order of the universe. The plain inference from the passage which introduces this

section is that he regarded himself as an embodiment of the moral order: and this claim which would be presumptuous in another has been seriously challenged by few; and those few are people like Nietzsche, who deny the truth and the validity of the whole Christian view of the world. But if one accepts, as most people do, the kind of thing that Jesus stands for as true and valid for life in this world, then it is not to be denied that he is the best embodiment of his own precept and therefore of the moral order as a whole. In point of fact, the moral nature of Jesus is—whether willingly or unwillingly—endorsed by the conscience of the average man.

But the tragedy of the world is that while men have paid lip-service to the way of Jesus, they have not taken that way themselves; and all through their history they have paid the price of their default. For there is in the universe not only a moral order but a principle of continuity which secures that a man shall reap what he sows,[1] that every transgression and disobedience shall receive due recompense of reward.[2] The punishment of sin is inherent in the sin itself as the harvest is in the seed. It carries the certainty of its own nemesis in itself. Men have ignored the moral order and have gone their own way, and the moral order has gone *its* way and crushed them.

It is of some consequence therefore that we should seek out the mind of Jesus upon this matter of the moral order, and of what is fundamental to it—namely

[1] Gal. vi. 7. [2] Heb. ii. 2.

upon what principle Jesus distinguished between right and wrong. If we can discover this we shall find out the moral basis upon which life rests and by their attitude to which men and nations rise and fall.

II

"For if ye forgive not men their trespasses neither will your Father forgive you your trespasses."

"All things, therefore, whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them."[1] This saying we call the Golden Rule, and in a somewhat uncritical way we call it the whole duty of man. But as a matter of fact it is nothing of the sort, and Jesus did not mean it to be taken as the ultimate principle of conduct. Indeed, how could he? For it raises moral obligation no higher than the plane of our own desires. Taken in a generous sense, it is a good rough rule of conduct for the man in the street. Observe what Jesus says concerning it—"for this is the law and the prophets." That is to say, it represents the highest point yet reached in ethical perception. And Jesus lays down another rule which goes beyond it—not "Do unto others as ye would that they should do to you," but "Do unto others as God has done unto you." God is our pattern; we are, as St. Paul says (in Moffatt's translation) to "copy God."[2] Jesus tells us to love our enemies and to do good to them that despitefully use us "that ye

[1] Matt. vii. 12. [2] Eph. v. 1.

may be the children of your Father,'"[1] who loves men in this undiscriminating way. St. Paul sees this and lays it down categorically, " Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, *forgiving one another as God in Christ hath forgiven you.*"[2] So also St. John " *If God so loved us we also ought to love one another.*"[3] And it was Jesus who laid down the principle that the heavenly Father's perfection was to be the goal of ours.[4]

What then does Jesus tell us about the moral nature of God? The saying " God is love " does not come to us from Jesus, but it easily might have done so. For in no other terms can we define the impression that Jesus gives us of the Father. But at this point it may be as well to deal with a misconception about this matter which is quite common, namely, that when we speak of the moral nature of God we have to speak of his *holiness* as well as of his love, as though they were in some sense different and even antithetical qualities.

The word holiness is used relative to man as well as to God; and every religion has its doctrine of personal holiness. Originally the word was used in a ritual sense, to denote things and persons set apart to the service of God. But with the growing recognition of the unity and the moral character of God the word acquired an ethical content; and in a rough generalization the doctrine of holiness is that it consists in the

[1] Matt. v. 44-45.
[2] Eph. iv. 32.
[3] 1 John iv. 11.
[4] Matt. v. 48.

acquisition by the believer of the moral character of his deity. But when it is used of the Christian God it is to signify an aspect of his character which cannot presumably be included in the term "love." Popularly, holiness is regarded as covering the "righteousness," the "justice," of God, and is generally associated with the stern and austere attributes of the Deity. But this is both to misconceive the meaning and activity of love, and to accept traditional ideas without sufficient analysis. God is love, and love only; and when we say that God is holy, we mean that His love is perfect, absolute, invariable, true to itself through everything. We mean that God will never go back upon Himself. It is not that He is "justice" as well as "love," if we use the word justice in the popular sense. Indeed, it would be difficult to associate popular justice with a God who visits the sins of the fathers upon the children even to the third and fourth generations and who sends his rain on the just and the unjust and makes his sun to shine on the good and the evil alike. But this dualism persists in men's thought of God chiefly because they do not think of love in the same way as the New Testament writers do.

We may perhaps approach this subject in detail by observing how much the mind of Jesus was engaged with the question of injuries and their forgiveness. We are, he says, to "forgive seven times in a day," and even "unto seventy times seven."[1] In teaching

[1] Matt. xviii. 22; Luke xvii. 4.

his disciples to pray he attaches to the petition for forgiveness the words, "as we also forgive our debtors."[1] And in a sort of footnote to the prayer he singles out the point for special mention. Only the forgiving are forgiven. The unforgiving go unforgiven. It is an indication of the place that the subject occupies in his mind that this is the only point in the prayer that receives this emphasis. Jesus was but carrying out the logic of his own precept when he said on the Cross: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."[2]

But forgiveness as Jesus thought of it was something more than the remitting and the forgetting of an injury, merely letting bygones be bygones. Few of us indeed go even that distance. In one of his parables Jesus likens sin to a bad debt and the forgiving of sin to the writing-off of a bad debt.[3] But he would not have regarded this as a complete description of what he meant by forgiveness. It is not merely to write off the bad debt, but to resume business with the defaulter on the old terms. In a word, it is reconciliation. Forgiveness is the healing of a broken fellowship, the restoration of interrupted friendship. It is the re-establishment of right personal relationships.

But is one to forgive without the offender's repentance? Apparently not. "If he repent, thou shalt

[1] Matt. vi. 12. [2] Luke xxiii. 34.
[3] Luke vii. 41.

forgive him.'"[1] But there is after all something greater and better than the duty of forgiveness, namely the grace of forgiveness. And the characteristic of what I call the grace of forgiveness is that it does not wait for the offender's repentance, but goes out to provoke it. The greater forgiveness is that which anticipates the repentance and by anticipating it calls it forth. Here we have the essential meaning of the "hard sayings"[2] about the other cheek and the second mile. When one is struck, one's impulse is to retaliate, to pay the offender back in his own coin. But that achieves nothing but multiplied bitterness. It makes the man sorry for himself, not for his sin. What we have to do is not to break the fellow's head, but that tremendous and fundamental thing, to break his *heart*. It is what St. Paul means: "If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him to drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head,"[3] or, as Dr. Moffatt translates it, "thou shalt make him feel a burning sense of shame."

It is worth observing here that this is what God does, according to St. Paul. "God commendeth his love toward us in this that *while we were yet sinners* Christ died for us." "*While we were yet enemies*, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son."[4] God did not wait for our repentance: He did all in His power to provoke it. He bore greatly and gently with sinners—as the Psalmist said, "These things

[1] Luke xvii. 3.
[2] Matt. v. 39-42.
[3] Rom. xii. 20.
[4] Rom. v. 8-10.

thou didst and I kept silence "—" overlooking the sins that were done aforetime,"[1] as St. Paul says—that men might take His forbearance as an invitation to repentance. And as Jesus said, He sent them his servants, the prophets, and at last sent them His Son.[2] He left no deed of love undone that man might be moved to repentance.

III

" If therefore thou art offering thy gift at the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar and go thy way. First be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift."

" The Spirit of Jesus," says William Blake, " is continual forgiveness of sins." And again, he says, " The glory of Christianity is to conquer by forgiveness." The disciple of Jesus is called upon to forgive utterly and unconditionally, to forgive not on repentance, but to forgive in order to provoke repentance. But it is not a matter of forgiveness for its own sake, but in order to restore a broken unity, a severed relation. This is the point intended in the emphasis upon restitution in the saying quoted at the beginning of this paragraph.

We are undoubtedly here on the trail of the funda-

[1] Rom. iii. 25. [2] Matt. xxi. 33-39.

mental principle of the ethics of Jesus. We shall probably best pursue the matter by contrasting Jesus' prescription for the treatment of offenders with the popular conception of justice.

What do we mean by "justice"? We can answer the question most satisfactorily by taking one or two instances of the operation of justice. Two brothers have a dispute about the division of their father's estate, and the controversy is brought for settlement to court. In that case, justice requires that the estate shall be divided "equitably," that is to say, consistently with a due regard to the claims and rights of both parties. A worker in a factory loses a finger owing to some defect in the machinery. He sues his employer for compensation on account of the loss.[1] If it can be proved that the accident was due to the employer's negligence, then the worker is conceded to have a claim against the employer and a right to the compensation which he claims. A man steals another man's pocketbook, and he is proved guilty; he receives a punishment which is supposed to be in some way the equivalent of the crime.

Justice then is conceived as lying in the equitable adjustment of conflicting claims, in the suitable redress of injury, in the due punishment of offences. It is to be observed, first, that there runs throughout the whole administration of justice the idea of striking a balance. And it is worth recalling that the symbolic figure of Justice is a blindfolded woman who holds a

[1] That is, if there is a Compensation Law in operation!

pair of scales in her hand. We sometimes speak in seriousness words that were written in jest, of "making the punishment fit the crime." We punish murder with death. And though we no longer say, "An eye for an eye," yet when a man loses an eye through the offence or the negligence of another, we fix a money equivalent of the loss and award it as "damages." We even find courts venturing to assess a cash valuation of a broken heart! And where no question of offence or injury arises we think of justice as a process of equity, the due adjustment of conflicting claims or rights.

But observe also that this all rests upon a doctrine of "rights," rights of the individual or of the group. And justice has to do with the assertion and vindication of these "rights" in the event of any invasion or violation of them. The "rights" of the worker are vindicated against the employer to whose negligence was due the loss of his finger. The "rights" of a legatee under the terms of a will are asserted against a person who endeavours to violate them. The "rights" of society are vindicated against the criminal.

So that our reception of Justice, and therefore our Doctrine of *Right*,[1] start from a view of the integrity

[1] It may be observed that in this discussion the difference between *Right* and *Rights* can best be grasped by remembering that the antithesis of *Right* is Wrong, while the antithesis of *Rights* is Duties. It should perhaps be also pointed out that the word *equity* is used here in its plain dictionary sense and not in the technical sense that it has in law.

and inviolability of certain "rights." Law is the definition and codification of these "rights," and the processes of justice have come into being because these "rights" are liable to be disregarded or to be in conflict with one another. And the findings of justice are enforced by a machinery of injunctions and retributive penalties.

Jesus was once asked to settle a dispute between two brothers about a dead man's estate.[1] The equities of the case had been badly violated; and the rights of one party grievously disregarded. But Jesus summarily refused to have anything at all to do with the matter. What he said about it was: "Beware of covetousness." The right as Jesus saw it was so little vindicated by a mere equitable division of the property that he would not touch the dispute. It required something deeper than adjusting the outward equities of the case: it could be satisfied with nothing less than the reconciliation of the parties. And for that it was necessary to remove the covetousness which was at the root of the quarrel. The equities would in that event take handsome care of themselves. But the covetousness stood in the way, and however fairly the estate might be divided, the old self-love would still remain in possession.

Jesus was little concerned with people's "rights," for he saw that their rights were forever involving them in conflict. His concern was for their real *interests;* and these he believed to be always identical. More-

[1] Luke xii. 13-15.

over, men would not quarrel about them, if they once saw them, nor indeed would they be disposed to quarrel about anything else. For these interests are of a kind that do not provoke covetousness or conflict. Rather do they stimulate co-operation and fellowship. Jesus' whole attitude rested upon the fact of the underlying solidarity of men and the consequent continuity, mutuality and identity of their essential interests. Here is the root of Jesus' ethics. It derives from the circumstance of human solidarity, and for him the principle that distinguished between the rightness and wrongness of conduct was its bearing upon this solidarity. Did it reinforce it or disrupt it? Our common life to-day is ordered, justice is administered, our whole view of human relations is defined in accordance with *a doctrine of human rights that are self-regarding and are therefore potentially always in conflict.* The ultimate right as Jesus saw it was based upon *a doctrine of human interests that are always in fact identical.* The common view starts from the individual as an individual: the doctrine of Jesus starts from a view of the individual as a social being whose life and growth are organically bound up with those of his fellows. The one regards man as being social only in spite of himself, and as having to be constrained into social conduct. The other regards man as instinctively social and, when he is allowed to be true to himself, swinging naturally to the pole of fellowship. It is likely that Jesus' contempt for popular notions of justice sprang from the fact that they

assumed and therefore perpetuated that individualism which was the denial of the solidarity upon the realization and deepening of which all human good depended.[1]

For Jesus, right conduct consisted of those things that make for human unity. That is why he lays so much stress upon forgiveness and restitution, and why he has so little room in his mind for doctrines of punishment and retaliation which perpetuate human disunion. Right conduct is that which creates, fosters, enriches, restores fellowship; wrong conduct is that which denies, destroys, hinders fellowship. At last morality is the art of fellowship. The emphasis of the gospels is steadily upon the society-making graces. They know no distinction between "social" and "individual" ethics. On the contrary, they teach what we may call an "organic" ethics, which identifies social and private duty. Even that peculiarly individual virtue of veracity is urged upon the Ephesian Christians by St. Paul, because "we are members one of another."[2] It is particularly to the point that on the one occasion that Jesus gives us the materials

[1] Since the above was written, the general drift of the argument has been confirmed in my mind by an article in *The Atlantic Monthly* (Sept., 1920) by Mr. Louis Bartlet on "The Newer Justice," in which he points out how certain new developments in the Administration of Justice (Courts of Domestic Relations, Children's Courts, etc.) express a "social" conception of justice. Here the emphasis is upon conciliation and reclamation in contradistinction to the "individualistic" bias toward retribution and penalty.

[2] Eph. iv. 25.

for a definition of salvation—the conversion of Zacchæus—he should describe it as a social experience.[1] Zacchæus was made a member of a family—"forasmuch as he also is a son of Abraham." And it was so that Zacchæus himself felt it, for he immediately began to act as a member of a family should. "Half of my goods I give to the poor, and if I have exacted anything wrongfully, I restore it fourfold." He began to perform those social acts that were there and then within his power.

We are, however, not to suppose that because Jesus treats fellowship as the touchstone of right and wrong, that fellowship is an end in itself. Fellowship is important because human nature is so made that it only finds itself and grows in fellowship. Fellowship can and may be prostituted to perverse uses. Men can associate for wrong and vicious purposes, just as there may be honour among thieves. Fellowship is good only when it is devoted to its own appointed end of enriching life and helps men to rise above themselves to higher things. Nor is this exaltation of fellowship to be interpreted as meaning that Jesus subordinated the individual to the society. On the contrary, Jesus was jealous for the individual, and his thought was for men rather than for society; but he knew that a man could only find himself as he made common cause with his brethren and identified himself with them. Indeed, it may be said that for him the whole duty of man consisted in self-identification with the

[1] Luke xix. 1-19.

other man, as it was also the path to self-realization. "He that loseth his life . . . shall find it.'"[1]

IV

"But when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him cast the first stone. And again he stooped down and with his finger wrote upon the ground. And they, when they heard it, went out one by one . . . and Jesus was left alone, and the woman where she was, in the midst. And Jesus lifted up himself and said unto her, Woman, where are they? Did no man condemn thee? And she said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said, Neither do I condemn thee; go and sin no more."

Professor Rauschenbusch has defined love as "the energy of a steadfast will, bent upon creating fellowship." It is time that in the interests of clear thinking and sound speech, some effort should be made to deliver the word *love* from the slough of sugary sentimentality—and worse—into which it has fallen. It is properly used of the sum of those attitudes and activities which make for fellowship. It is the source of the manifold energy of social attraction and cohesion. It is, moreover, a power of redemption, converting enemies into friends and expelling the self-love which destroys the unity of mankind.

[1] Matt. x. 39.

But Jesus was too uncompromising a realist to suppose that human love even at its best was infallible in its effects. "With God," indeed, "all things are possible." But with men? Generally, he would say; but there are exceptions. There are men so entrenched in their self-love and their pride that they cannot be reached by any human good-will. "If thy brother sin against thee, go, show him his fault between thee and him alone: if he hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he hear thee not, take with thee one or two more, that at the mouth of two witnesses or three every word may be established. And if he refuse to hear them, tell it unto the church also, and if he refuse to hear the church, let him be unto thee as the gentile and the publican."[1] With such people there is nothing to do but to leave them to themselves —and to the mercy of God. The same idea finds expression in the parable of the Fruitless Figtree,[2] where it is made plain that contumacy may be carried to a point to which love is powerless to follow it. The self-love of the Pharisee had led him on the way to the unpardonable sin, to the moral blindness which

[1] Matt. xviii. 15-17. This passage undoubtedly suggests a closer organization of the Christian society and of its discipline than had been reached in the lifetime of Jesus. Moreover the use of the words *gentile* and *publican* is of a kind that falls awkwardly from the lips of Jesus. It is hard to accept the passage in its present form as coming directly from Jesus. It is probably a later elaboration of the original saying of Jesus, but there is no reason to suppose that its general sense misinterprets the mind of Jesus.

[2] Luke xiii. 6-9.

calls black white,[1] the sin that cannot be repented of. And Jesus says that the branch of the tree which does not bear fruit is cut off. When a man persists in remaining outside the fellowship or in conduct which denies or despises the fellowship, his self-exclusion must be accepted and he be left to pay the price of his pride and self-love.

But such persons as these are extreme and exceptional cases. Men, as a rule, are amenable to love, which means that they can be redeemed. This task of redeeming men from the anarchism of self-love is one of the primary obligations of a Christian society. As things are, what we have for the moral anarchist is retribution; it is at last beginning to dawn dimly upon us that our task with him is his redemption. The traditional treatment of crime secures for society at a given time a certain immunity from the activities of a number of criminally disposed persons. At the best, it may have deterred a few poor spirits from criminal adventure. The one thing it is incapable of doing is to solve the moral problem which crime embodies. For what by our present methods we do is either to harden the criminal or to turn him into a shuffling parasite by breaking him. So far from solving the moral problem, we have only aggravated it.

No society can afford to leave a dangerous criminal at large. It must put him under restraint. But, having put him under restraint, a Christian society would

[1] He could not distinguish between the Holy Spirit and the Prince of Demons. Matt. xii. 22-32.

not be concerned with punishing him for his crime so much as with curing him of his criminality. Indeed, one of the first things that a really Christian society would do is to establish a new diagnosis of the social misfit, whether he be pauper or criminal. It would treat moral anarchy not as a danger to be suppressed so much as a disease to be cured. And when the criminal, especially the young criminal, is put in conditions which encourage the growth of the sense of social responsibility, as a rule he responds to the treatment. Samuel Butler was not far wrong when he suggested that a liar might be a case for a hospital.

Moreover, it is to a great extent true that we owe this treatment to the criminal. When we realize how much crime is due to mental deficiency and how much mental deficiency in its turn is due to evil social conditions that our fathers before us and we who have come after them have tolerated, we cannot repudiate a certain share in the guilt of the criminal. While we hold that he is responsible for his act, the fact remains that we are to some extent responsible *for him*. And in consequence, it becomes our obligation to redeem him.

This matter of social or collective responsibility carries us, however, a good deal farther. In the days before the railroad the moral responsibilities of the individual were relatively simple. Those of the ordinary man hardly crossed the parish bounds. But the railroad and all that has come after it have created a social integration far more complex and far more ex-

tended than anything that our fathers knew. No man can now trace the moral consequences of his own acts or gauge the measure of his complicity in wrongful acts, whether personal or public. The ramifications of modern business, the vast network of international credit, the endless specializations of the machine industry—all this makes for a labyrinthine tangle of moral responsibility through which the individual cannot hope to thread a way. A man may, quite innocently, buy a share in some commercial enterprise, but he cannot trace that investment through all its adventures until it returns to him in the shape of dividend. He does not know what atrocity it may have aided or abetted in some distant Putumayo, or in what cruelty it may have co-operated in a Nigerian tin-mine. Not the most meticulous care can secure me from wearing or eating something that has been produced by underpaid labour, and from being therefore involved in complicity in "sweating." All the rudiments of this modern complexity were present in the simplest societies of the past, and men have always been guilty of each other's sins. But the coming of what has been called the "great society" has produced an extent and an intensity of collective moral responsibility which is different from anything that the world has ever hitherto seen. The one thing that is clearly no longer possible (even if it ever was) is for a man to try to "cut out" of this welter and save his own soul. He cannot so lightly escape the vast common collective guilt. Never was it so plain

that if we would be saved, we must be saved together. Personal salvation and social salvation belong indissolubly to one another. It will be characteristic of a Christian society that it will not leave the great tasks of forgiveness and restitution to its individual members. It will express its own soul in great collective acts of atonement. This will serve to show how far a cry it is even at this late day to anything that might be called a Christian society.

V

"There were some present . . . who told him of the Galileans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. And he answered and said unto them, Think ye that these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans, because they have suffered these things? . . . Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and killed them, think ye that they were offenders above all the men that dwell in Jerusalem? I tell you, Nay; but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."

It was said on a previous page that justice in our sense and use of the word could hardly be attributed to a God who treats the good and the evil alike, and who visits the sins of the fathers upon the children. The consequences of sin appear for the most part to fall elsewhere than where the guilt lies. The children who suffered in the European War were paying the

price of the sins and the negligences of their elders. And whatever may be said about the moral order in which this kind of thing may happen, it can hardly be described as just, if we interpret justice in the traditional sense.

There are large and baffling questions in this region which in the present state of our knowledge admit of no wholly satisfactory answer. But when we think of these things it is well to remember one or two general facts. We have already seen that there is a principle of moral continuity in the world which binds our deeds to their fruits with an infrangible certainty. We have also insisted upon the fact of human solidarity, the circumstance that we are bound to one another by a thousand indissoluble ties. No man lives to himself alone. The thing he is and the thing he does affects the whole of life. We are—as it were—ganglia in a nervous system as wide as the world and as enduring as time. But both these principles of solidarity and continuity are in themselves morally colourless. They belong to the economy of the universe, like the law of gravitation, and tell us nothing of the moral nature of God. And each is capable of bad use and good. They secure that evil will work out its own consequences to the end; but equally do they secure the same kind of march and circulation for the good. The order that provides that we suffer for the evil deeds of others provides no less that we shall profit by their good deeds. It does not compromise the love of God that men in the exercise of

their freedom should choose to use for evil what God has provided to minister to their good.

There was a time when it was commonly supposed that if a great misfortune befell a man, it was evidence of the man's having committed some unusual sin. So the people with whom Jesus had to do interpreted the calamity that befell the Galileans who had been massacred by Pilate, and the victims of the fallen tower at Siloam. Of this view Jesus makes short work. These men were not greater sinners than the common run of men, and once it is realized how much is involved in the principle of solidarity and moral continuity, Jesus' view needs no defence. The Galilean massacre, the accident at Siloam—each was the result of processes for which the victims were not more responsible than other men. There is—as the consequence of our solidarity—a law of moral averages in human society. Like every law, it has its exceptions, but it is unquestionably true that the morality of a human society is very much of a piece. You may have your saint and your criminal, but they are marginal persons. The rest of us are very much alike, neither wholly black not wholly white, but clad in various shades of grey.

Hence the common sense of Jesus' warning against censoriousness— "Judge not that ye be not judged."[1] There is, as someone has said, "so much good in the worst of us, and so much bad in the best of us, that it does not become any of us to say anything about

[1] Matt. vii. 1.

the rest of us." Censoriousness implies a claim of moral superiority, a claim which is always doubtful. That is why Jesus has so much to say in favour of humility, and is so insistent in his warning to "him that exalteth himself."[1] We have neither the ground in ourselves nor the knowledge of others that gives us a title to pass moral judgments upon them. We are, all the same, very ready to pass moral judgments, and with great presumption to pass very summary and sweeping judgments. But the difference between us all is never other than the difference between more grey and less grey. The shading is so fine that it requires an "eye that is single" to detect the differences. And none of us have that particular quality of eye. We are all in the region of the moral average, and it is the strange paradox of this matter that the more one rises above that plane, the more inextricably does one feel oneself tied to it. And the truth about us all is that "except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."

And what is true about individuals in a society is true of societies among themselves. There also solidarity works out its moral average in precisely the same way. And in modern times when the intercourse of nations has become so close and intense, this is more true than it ever was, especially among those nations that are called civilized. It is one of the peculiarities of a state of war that it destroys our power of moral discrimination. And in supremely critical moments when we should aim at the severest

[1] Luke xiv. 11; xviii. 14.

moral realism, we yield to the worst form of sentimentality. The enemy is coal-black, and we are angels of light, all of us, whoever our allies may be. But a little dispassionate reflection should serve to show that some of the Allied nations are to-day showing unmistakable symptoms of the moral distemper which they condemned so vehemently in their enemies. Here, as elsewhere, we have shades of grey. And whatever the final judgment may be on the relative culpabilities of the belligerents, it is perfectly sure that the nations involved in the late war stood as a moral unity before God, reaping together what they sowed together.

And here our argument brings us up once more to the need of mutual forgiveness. After all, we are in the same boat. "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." What is there for us to do, who are guilty of each other's sins and have to pay together for each other's sins, but to cease from mutual judgment and to practise the grace of generous mutual forgiveness? "Then his lord said to him, Thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all thy debt, because thou besoughtest me. Shouldest thou not also have mercy upon thy fellow-servant, even as I had mercy upon thee?"[1] And, as William Blake asks,

"Why should punishment weave the veil with iron wheels of war,
When forgiveness might weave it with wings of cherubim?"

[1] Matt. xviii. 32-33.

VI

" Ye call me Teacher and Lord, and ye say well; for so I am. If I, then, the Lord and the Teacher have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet."

" I am in the midst of you as he that serveth."

One of the most common illusions that men harbour is that they can solve a problem by fighting about it. We are indeed all soaked in the ideology of conflict. But we should by now have learnt that a conflict which ends in the victory of one party and the defeat of the other has not been settled. The problem is shelved and not solved, and it will come up for solution another day when solution will be less easy. The War of 1870 laid the train of the War of 1914. The Homestead Strike had its inevitable sequel in the Steel Strike of 1919. There are no terminal facilities along that line.

We heard a great deal about " the moral aims " of the World War; and many people sincerely believed that the war would achieve a high moral purpose. They spoke of its " righteousness," and undoubtedly there was a question of political " righteousness " involved. The public law of Europe had been violated, and it had to be vindicated. Now we can here raise no question concerning war as a political measure for achieving political ends. But the question still re-

mains whether war can achieve ends which are moral in a Christian sense. The answer to those who looked for some great moral achievement as the result of the war is simply—*Circumspice,* look around. The plain truth is that you may go to war to achieve moral ends, but you will no more achieve moral ends through war than you will gather figs of thistles. You may have political justification for war, according to traditional political standards, but you can in no wise moralize its processes. And the brave attempts to moralize the processes of war through the Hague Convention went for next to nothing at all in the actual business of the late war. However fervently you may pray for figs, your harvest will be thistles. It is useless to say that the end justifies the means until you are sure that the means can accomplish the ends. In the present case, the moral end was associated with the defeat of the Central Powers. The Central Powers were defeated, but the moral end of extirpating militarism and imperialism is not yet accomplished, and it appears farther from accomplishment than it was in 1914. The thistle bush has been true to itself—it has grown more thistles. Of course if the defeat of the Central Powers is deemed to be in itself a sufficient return for the cost of the war, well and good. But we are speaking now of the "moral aims" of the war.

Casuistic arguments about the use of force are not relevant, for force of whatever kind, physical or spiritual, is a gift of God and has its legitimate uses. War is not merely an exercise of force. It is the use

of force under conditions which for one thing imply deceit and a doctrine of calculated and systematic perversion and obscuration of truth. And even worse, the conditions imply a contempt of personality which is a concrete rejection of the law of solidarity and the principle of fellowship. It is a constructive denial (if the phrase be permitted) of the Christian principle of righteousness. When men spoke of the righteousness of the war they were working on a conception of righteousness that was based upon the sanctity of rights that are always potentially and for the most part actually in conflict, and on a theory of justice which requires the violent vindication of violated rights. But it is intellectual confusion to call this righteousness Christian. It is Judaic, Roman, individualistic, anything but Christian, if we are to take the New Testament as the authority upon Christianity.

The world to-day is a seething welter of hate, bitterness and resentment, and so far from having ended war, war has multiplied wars. And so long as those tempers exist, we are living in a fools' paradise if we suppose that we are not all the time on the brink of more war. Moreover we have no guarantee of the diminution of these tempers except as the nations abandon the doctrine of particularist rights for a doctrine of common and identical interests. The Peace Treaty was wrought out apparently on the assumption that while the Allies had certain common interests, they had none in which the Central Powers had any share. For that reason, it is a treaty of anything but

peace. There can never be anything which can appropriately be described as peace until the nations abandon their particularist aims and claims. They must learn to order their lives on the basis of that solidarity which determines the law of human life and the moral order of the universe; and which makes it forever impossible that the misfortune or the decline of one nation can be advantageous to another nation. This is a revolution of thought that will take a long time to accomplish; and it will have to begin in the schools by (among other things) laying the stress in the teaching of history upon those influences that have made for human unity rather than as is now the case upon those things which have made for division and disunion; and by insisting in the teaching of geography that a frontier is a point at which people meet and not a barrier by which they are separated, a *rendezvous* and not a party-wall.

But this principle holds in other regions as well. We are to-day in the midst of a devastating class-antagonism, and it is as sure as anything can well be that there is no deliverance to be had from "class-war" by "fighting it out." For that will only multiply bitterness and cause life to be governed for an indefinite time by the politics of resentment. It is frequently being said by well-meaning people that the interests of capital and labour are identical, and the saying has a fine Christian sound. But while industry is dominated by the profit-system, and labour is subject to the wage-system, it is difficult to see how

the interests of capital and labour are identical. Of course the *ultimate* interests of both are identical in their character as groups of men, but these are not the interests under discussion. The human interests of both classes and the material interests of the working class suffer equally under the present industrial order; and it should be plain that there can be no peace or fellowship in industry until industry is organized upon a basis other than the profit-and-wage system which at present prevails. Can this hindrance to fellowship be removed without denying fellowship in the act? Short-sighted capitalists may suppose that they can resist the drift of change and short-sighted workers may imagine that they can hasten the change by fighting it out. But that is pure illusion. If the possessing classes were wise in their generation, they would act upon the advice of Jesus—"Agree with thine adversary quickly while thou art with him in the way,"[1] and make large voluntary progressive renunciations of wealth and power; then we might thread a way out of the present tangle. But the renunciations of the possessing classes must be responded to by the good-will of the workers. And in an atmosphere of reason and good-will (the antithesis of Versailles), Capital and Labour might work out something deeper than industrial peace—a living creative fellowship in the interests of the community. When the employer and the worker shall say each for himself out of a pure heart, "I am among you as

[1] Matt. v. 25.

he that serveth,"[1] then is the Kingdom of God come among us. But will it so come?

It is clear that if the basis of our common life is to be shifted from the present doctrine of particularist rights to a doctrine of common interests, there must be something like what Nietzsche called "a trans-valuation of values." And speaking roughly, the translation must be from the material to the spiritual valuation of life. Men will never see that their interests are identical so long as those interests are conceived in terms of money-values as they are to-day. If it is to my interest to get as large a portion of the cake as possible, then by no showing can my interest be identical with my neighbour who also wants the largest possible share of the cake. For the cake is after all at any particular moment definite and limited in size. Men's interests are identical only under conditions in which every man can obtain all that he has capacity for, without impoverishing any other man, and those conditions obtain only in respect of the things that we may broadly call spiritual. And when a man finds a sufficiency of these things, he inevitably relegates to a subordinate place the material goods in the acquisition of which the good of life is to-day supposed to lie. The ascendancy of the economic motive provokes and perpetuates conflict; and it is only as men perceive the sovereignty of spiritual values and the promise they hold of fullness of life that the economic motive and the competitive

[1] Luke xxii. 27.

system will disappear. And the sovereignty of the spiritual values implies practically two things: first, that the acquisitive life is supplanted by the creative and redemptive life, and that the chief end of life is seen to lie in the doing of works of love and beauty; and second, that the priority of life is established over every institution, political or religious, every dogma, theological or economic, every system whether of business or of government. It is a recognition of the centrality of the soul for thought and action, and a refusal to subordinate the human spirit to the requirements of Church or State or Market.

VII

"And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring . . . and they shall become one flock, one shepherd."

The logic of the ideal of fellowship cannot reach a conclusion until it has embraced the whole of mankind.

Mr. H. G. Wells has told us that mankind is forever "pursuing the boundary of its possible community." What we see in the history of man, so far as we know it, is a constant impulse to broaden the geographical basis of fellowship. First the family,

then the tribe, then the nation, and now vast aggregations of people within the same political unity, such as the United States of America and the British Empire. It is held by some that the expansion of the social unit has reached its term in what we call the nation and that nationality is a permanent principle in the life of the world. In a sense that is true; for nationality represents in the realm of human life the variation of type which is common to all life. But to say that the expansion of a man's social grasp stops with the nation is to talk nonsense. For the nation is simply a stage in the providential order by which the cave-man is to grow at last into a citizen of the world.

It may, however, be true that the world of men will always be organized upon the basis of nationality. But it is also true that the nations which have a definite existence to-day have no fixity of tenure. The national being is a fluid affair, always subject to modification and change of many kinds. Nations are not made by a community of race or of language or of faith, but by a community of tradition and memory. There are to-day no "thoroughbred" nations, or monoglot nations or nations holding a common faith. What gives unity to the national mind is the memory and tradition of great things done together. The national qualities have been produced by the processes of the common life, and there is no guarantee that any of them are permanent and unchangeable. It is a mistake to suppose that a nation has any necessary fixity of character or of characteristic. And nationality is in no wise to

be regarded as an absolute principle for the determination of conduct.

The disrepute of the national principle is due to the fact that it has worked in the world as a principle of division and a root of conflict. It has represented too often nothing but the massed egoism of a community. But there is no reason to suppose that it need be a divisive influence in perpetuity. On the contrary, the current discussion of a League of Nations proves that already the social grasp of man is faintly embracing the whole world. That we speak gravely of a League of Nations is a fact of much greater importance than the prospects of a particular league, for it means that there has been a very large and general extension of the social vision of the average man.

But we shall look in vain for any living League of Nations until the nations agree to discard their self-regarding policies and sincerely accept the doctrine and practice of international reciprocity. The "hard-shell" nationalist will probably say that it is the business of the nation to defend and to pursue its own interests regardless of other interests, and that the code of personal morals does not apply to the nation. This, however, involves us in a moral dualism of a peculiarly destructive kind and which is indeed hardly distinguishable from a kind of atheism. There are on this view two moral orders, contradictory and mutually exclusive, in the universe; so that the universe is a house divided against itself, an equation which cancels out, landing you in a moral nihilism. And you are

left with a yea-and-nay Deity, a God who "faces North by South." This simply will not do. We have to accept the view that there is one and only one moral order for men and nations alike. And the law of fellowship is as binding on nations as it is on persons.

A League of Nations is not necessarily the world fellowship of mankind. The League may work rather as an organ of equilibration than as an organ of co-operation, as a means of settling disputes than as an organ of mutual service. And so long as self-regard reigns in the world of nations the best the League can do is to preserve a precarious peace for a season. Soon or late, its constituents will fly asunder under the pressure of their centrifugal egoism. It is only as an organ of positive and planned co-operation in the service of life that any League of Nations is entitled to cherish an expectation of life for itself.

Long ago, Adam Smith saw that at bottom the economic interests of the nations were identical. He saw that every nation had been fitted to produce certain commodities and that the wealth of nations was best served by the unhampered circulation of the commodities that they produce. He therefore advocated the removal of all barriers to the exchange of commodities and became the father of "free trade." But free trade was hard hit by competitive trade and never acquired that character of free and balanced reciprocity which Adam Smith had in mind. Nor will it, until tariff walls are pulled down and there is a League of Nations which is (among other things) a clearing

house for the free and emancipated trade of the world. Then shall come to pass the dream of William Blake :

> " In my exchanges every land
> Shall walk; and mine in every land,
> Mutual shall build Jerusalem,
> Both heart in heart and hand in hand."

When Jerusalem was about to be rebuilt after the exile, Zechariah insisted that it should be built without walls. This is a great and precious parable. In this world there are broadly two types of mind, one that builds walls and another that pulls them down. There are those people who build tariff-walls in order to keep the foreign merchant out; there are others who build walls of steel in order to warn any possible enemy to keep his distance; still others build credal walls, to keep the unbeliever out of the holy place; and there are those who build caste walls in order to keep the " lower classes " in their place. But there are those also who live to break down these walls and to broaden out the basis of human fellowship. Of these the greatest is Jesus. He raised no wall around himself, nor did he fence his church around against any man. Consider his tolerance : " He that is not against you is for you."[1] Consider his catholicity : " I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel."[2] Consider his charity : " Father, forgive them for they know not what they do."[3] His love had no frontiers. St.

[1] Luke ix. 50. [2] Matt. viii. 10. [3] Luke xxiii. 34.

Paul says that he broke down the middle wall of partition between the Jew and the Greek and in so doing he broke down every party-wall in the world.[1] When he saw the multitudes, distressed and scattered, as sheep not having a shepherd, he surely saw also away beyond the generations another day when not only the lost sheep of the House of Israel, but the other sheep which were not of that fold, should be gathered in, "and they shall become one flock, one shepherd."[2]

[1] Eph. ii. 14. [2] John x. 16.

CHAPTER V

Yesterday and To-morrow

(Matt. v. 17-20; Mark xi. 15-18; xvii. 24-27; Luke xxii. 14-23; Luke xxiv.)

I

" Ye have heard that it was said to them of old time . . . but I say unto you . . ."

TO respect tradition, as Mr. G. K. Chesterton says somewhere, is but to extend the vote to our ancestors. On the other hand, James Russell Lowell said in one of his poems that " time makes ancient good uncouth." These statements apparently contradict one another. But they are contradictory only if we " lump " all the past into one undifferentiated whole. The human past, like every human thing, is mingled good and evil. There are things that we can learn from our forefathers, but we should be foolish to suppose that they can teach us everything or that nothing is worth learning except what they can teach us. For they were no more omniscient or infallible than their descendants are. Moreover, life is not a static thing. It is forever growing out of last year's clothes. The ancient good does sometimes go out of date.

Men sort themselves out on various principles, and one of these is their attitude to the past. Here they range from a rigid conservatism through various shades of liberalism to a thorough-going radicalism. The word radical is derived from the Latin word *radix,* which means a *root.* And so a radical is a person who is concerned with roots, generally with a view to pulling them up. There are doubtless some radicals who look upon all roots with equal dislike and want nothing so much as to dig them all out. For them the past contains no promise, and the only thing to do with it is to break with it utterly and to start out afresh. But that type of radicalism ignores the continuity of life, and whatever we may think of our inheritance from the past the one thing that we cannot do with it is to wipe it out. We may upset a few institutions, but the greater part of what we have inherited from the past, whether for good or evil, is within us. The past has written itself into our very lives, and we all carry it about with us. And outside of us, life is so intricately organized and so bound up with institutions that we cannot destroy one institution—not to speak of a clean sweep of institutions —without involving life in much confusion.

But there is a real sense in which every man should be a radical. We should all be concerned about the roots of things. And the roots of things are not all good or all bad. Some roots are good and some are bad. Some are partly good and partly bad. The right type of radicalism is that which wants to pull up the

bad roots. But the very reason for pulling up the bad roots is precisely the reason for preserving the good roots. So that the true radical is also the true conservative.

The *true* conservative, observe. For just as there is a radicalism that discredits itself by its excess, so there is a conservatism that defeats itself by its own blind rigidity. Things as they are, it says, are as they should be; the great Bad is change. Of course some conservatism is pure selfishness. It resists change because it would interfere with its comfort. But we need not seriously discuss that kind of conservatism, for it is only contemptible. We are thinking now of honest conservatism which believes that the world as it is needs no improvement. It is a curious frame of mind. If life stood still in a perfect world, something might be said for it. But as the world is palpably far from perfect, and as life does not stand still, the conservatism that resists change in the end hastens it by its very resistance.

Beside the radical and the conservative, we have the liberal always with us. He is the progressive person, the reformer, who accepts the existing framework of life as a whole but sees that it is capable of improvement. He aims to make it better, to humanize, to reform it. He sees that the privileged classes have more power and a richer life than the common people, and he is therefore on the side of the common people as against the privileged. He works for education, for industrial reform, for "uplift." But always

within the existing order. The conservative wants to preserve the existing order, the liberal wants to improve it, the radical wants to change it.

What men really need is a critical and discriminating attitude to life, which can be conservative, liberal, or radical as the occasion requires, which does not love change for the sake of change, yet is "not afraid of what is called for by the instinct of mankind." This attitude is indeed attended by the danger of becoming a sort of judicial apathy, just as the extremes of radicalism and conservatism tend to self-defeating violence. But if the will is harnessed to the judgment, this attitude of criticism and discrimination is the best guarantee and influence for a right and fruitful ordering of life. As things are, life has to "muddle through," and when one considers what a slough of partisan cries and labels, of prejudices and outworn traditions it has to muddle through, there is reason to be grateful that things are as well with it as they are.

It would be utter foolishness to attach any of these conventional labels to Jesus. The only thing we can do is to attach none of them or all of them. For Jesus was conservative, liberal, radical, all the time. He had no respect for an institution merely because it was old; yet the cleansing of the Temple was an act of the finest and purest conservatism.[1] He was conservative enough to believe in the permanent validity of the Law—"Till heaven and earth shall pass away, one

[1] Mark xi. 15-17.

jot or one tittle shall not pass away from the law. . . .'"[1] Yet his attitude to the Law was very much like the attitude of the modern theological liberal to the creeds. He was conservative enough to pay the Temple tax—the half-shekel[2]—and to bid cleansed lepers go show themselves to the priest[3]; but he was too radical to continue within the existing religious institutions and deliberately set out on a course which he believed would presently leave them derelict. He was indeed so radical that the religious conservatives of his day put him to death.

It is clear that to the mind of Jesus the human inheritance from the past was a mingling of good and bad. But the good was never quite good enough and the bad was often but the good perverted by wicked or stupid people. His own great inheritance from the past, like that of every Jew, was the Law. But good and great as the Law was, it was not good enough or great enough for the entire business of life. Moreover, in the hands of the Scribes and the Pharisees it became a positive evil and defeated those humane ends which it had been intended to serve. So far from abrogating the Law he declared that he had come to fulfil it; but he gave no quarter to the official interpretation of it. This official interpretation of it was what is called in the Gospels "the traditions of the elders."[4] To this, the attitude of Jesus was one of the purest radicalism. He would destroy it root and branch. For it

[1] Matt. v. 18.
[2] Matt. xvii. 24-27.
[3] Luke xvii. 14; Matt. viii. 4.
[4] Mark vii. 3.

was no heritage but an incubus, "binding upon men heavy burdens and grievous to be borne."[1] Jesus always "distinguished between things that differed." He was in all things a realist, always on guard against conventional and traditional valuations that had been falsified by time. He challenged all things to declare themselves, to show what they were not in appearance but in reality. He brought everything to his own consistent test—Does this thing make for life, for fellowship? Nothing was either good or bad merely because it was old; it was good or bad according as it made for the increase or the arrest of life and love.

It would be interesting to speculate what would happen if by some miracle the inhabitants of a country were in a short space of time to acquire this critical and discriminating attitude of Jesus. Some things are pretty certain. The existing political parties would disappear. The present religious sectarianism would also vanish. Men would make haste to discard those partisan labels in which they have to-day so naïve and pathetic a faith. Radicalism would make an *entente cordiale* with conservatism, not by a colourless compromise but by a rational synthesis. The mere passion for change would be as rare as the mere aversion to change, yet there would be changes both vast and deep. Men would order life not by party conflict but by common counsel; they would seek truth not in controversy but in fellowship. They would no longer confound truth with tradition, or faith with creed, or

[1] Matt. xxiii. 4.

society with institutions, or life with its forms. They would see the truth, and the truth would make them free.[1]

II

"They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them."

But institutions, traditions, forms, creeds—these are after all the lesser part of what yesterday has bequeathed to us. Greater than any or all of these is the rich treasury of human experience which is embodied in history. The past is the quarry out of which we draw the raw material of knowledge which thought turns into wisdom for the guidance of life. So at least it ought to be. As a matter of fact, however, the story of the human past is a closed book to most people, and most of those who have some historical knowledge do not know the vital side of it. For the history which we learn at school or college is merely the shell of history. We read about the outer course of events, but we hear little about the hidden influences —the ideas, the feelings, the aspirations—which have determined the drift of human affairs. We become more or less familiar with a chronicle, but we are left without the interpretation of it. Least of all have we come to regard history as the record of humanity at school, proving a very slow pupil, but gleaning here and there a morsel of wisdom.

[1] John viii. 32.

Human nature is always and everywhere very much the same. The natural differences between men are rarely more than skin deep. And the world changes but slowly. So that life in this world has always produced the same general kinds of experience. That is why so much ancient literature is living still. It is a record of men's experience of life, and wherever men have been able to tell about it with truth and power they have told an undying story. We still read, for instance, the Book of Psalms because it is for the greater part an apt, powerful and sometimes very beautiful transcript of what a number of men found in their own souls as they went their way in the world. And in the same way, for the man who has insight enough to read between its lines, the record of human history is full of suggestion for the conduct of life to-day. For all through history, the same causes have produced the same effects. History is a mine of wisdom which yesterday has bequeathed to to-day for the good of to-day and to-morrow. It is full of analogies, comparisons, parallels, illustrations, that can be used for warning or for inspiration or for illumination. It embodies certain general principles and tendencies which have produced their characteristic results all through the ages and are valid still for the management of life. History is one of the most fruitful words of God to men.

Jesus was well versed in the history of his own people; and he is constantly appealing to it. In the Gospel of Luke alone, he alludes to Elijah and the

widow of Sarepta, to Elisha and Naaman the Syrian, to David and the shewbread, to Sodom, Tyre and Sidon, to Jonah and the Ninevites, to Solomon and the Queen of Sheba, to Abel and a certain Zachariah, to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Noah, Lot and his wife. It is easy to see how full of meaning for the present he found the past. Time does indeed make much ancient good uncouth. But the experience of man is never stale or obsolete to the understanding mind. And when Jesus was confronted with a triple temptation, he met it with words that had come down long ages and had stood the test of the spiritual conflicts of many generations. And when he formulated his own programme, he did it not in words of his own, but in the words of an old prophetic vision. "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me; for he hath anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor. He hath sent me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord."[1]

A good deal of our human trouble—perhaps most—might be averted if we took pains to know and understand our common history, and came to it with an open mind. History may be so interpreted as to serve a merely private or partisan purpose, in which case its light is turned to darkness. But if the eye be single, the whole past is full of light. Yet we are strangely slow to learn from history or indeed from our own experience "the things that belong to our

[1] Luke iv. 18.

peace." When the disciples had one day fallen into a stupid bewilderment, because Jesus had bidden them "beware of the leaven of the Pharisees," and they fell to saying among themselves that he had said the thing because they had no bread with them, Jesus reproved them: "Do ye not yet understand?"[1] After all they had seen they had not learned enough to know a little parable when they saw it. And that is indeed a sort of epitome of our human story. Long before this Isaiah had complained—"Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider." And so it is to this day. Consider, for instance, this. If there is one thing about which the witness of history is clear, it is that you cannot destroy a dissenting opinion by coercion. Not only so, but an opinion persecuted is an opinion established. "The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church." We see the mistakes that our fathers made in this matter and we know that they were mistakes. Yet when our turn comes, we go on and make the same mistake. We "build the tombs of the prophets"[2] that our fathers put to death, and we kill others whom our children will honour as heroes and saints. In point of fact, dissent has always been the growing point of society, and a society which is mindful of its own peace and growth will at least practise toleration, which is a grace of spirit as well as a good policy. But toleration comes hard to most societies. We do not yet understand. And so history repeats itself. But there is no fatality about this.

[1] Mark viii. 14-21. [2] Matt. xxiii. 29.

We can prevent history from repeating itself if we choose. But we shall first have to know the history of the race and to ponder it before we shall have either the wit or the will to prevent it from repeating itself.

There is one very remarkable omission in Jesus' references to the past. The prophets almost without exception return again and again to the story of the deliverance from Egypt. But so far as the gospels tell us, Jesus never once alluded to it. The silence is as significant as if, say, Abraham Lincoln had never referred to the American Revolution. The omission must have been deliberate; but concerning the reason of it, we can only speculate. The Jew saw in the episode the beginning of the history of his people as a nation and every year he celebrated the anniversary of it with great solemnity. In this celebration Jesus did indeed join, and this makes his neglect of it in his teaching still more significant. Yet perhaps we may see the clue to Jesus' silence concerning the event in the fact that after his last celebration of it, he seems to have deliberately superseded the passover by another rite, the memorial supper which he instituted in the upper room.[1] He undoubtedly saw that the life of his nation was moving toward a climax of tragedy. He mourned that Jerusalem did not know the things that belonged to its peace; and the time was coming when its house would be left desolate. That period which had begun with the deliverance and Moses was

[1] Luke xxii. 14-23.

ending in disaster and miscarriage. That spiritual ministry to which God has called this people had been swamped by a narrow national and political purpose, which was being pursued by methods of violence and intrigue, and which was, we may not doubt, encouraged by a patriotic appeal to the story of the deliverance. And now that stage was coming to an end. What would it profit to speak of a beginning when that which had begun was so near to ending, especially when the story of the beginning was used to inspire conduct which would only hasten the ending? And already, a new period was at the door. Jesus regarded himself as the symbol and the beginning of a new stage in human affairs. He was not forgetful of much that was great and abiding in the past of his people, and of how deeply his own roots ran into the past, "beginning with Moses and the prophets"[1]; but his face was turned to the future.

III

"The Kingdom of heaven cometh not with observation: neither shall they say, Lo, here! or There! for lo! the kingdom of God is within you."

About his own personal future, Jesus seems after Peter's confession at Cæsarea Philippi to have been in no doubt. The significance of this prevision we shall discuss in the next chapter. And so far as individuals

[1] Luke xxiv. 27.

are concerned, his counsel to them was that they should not trouble themselves overmuch about the future. "Be not anxious for the morrow."[1] Live one day at a time and leave the rest to your heavenly Father. Mark Rutherford, in the preface to the second edition of his *Autobiography*, encourages his readers to cultivate "the good habit of not looking round the corner." And that might serve as a summary of what Jesus had to say on the matter to ordinary folk. This is not, however, to be taken as a justification for a reckless improvidence. Only they who seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness can afford not to be anxious for the morrow.

It has been held by some scholars that the teaching of Jesus is deeply coloured by the expectation of a sudden end of the age. The world as men knew it was coming to an end, and when the new world took its place, life would be on an entirely new basis. And the teaching of Jesus is therefore held to deal with the way men should carry themselves in the short period before the world should reach its end. He taught, as these scholars says, an *interim-ethic*. He did not mean his teaching to be taken as a rule for ordinary times; it was a special rule for that particular moment of time.

This is a very convenient way of shelving the peculiar difficulty of living out the precept of Jesus in one's own time. But it rests upon the assumption that it is certain that Jesus expected the end of the age

[1] Matt. vi. 34.

to come as many of his own fellow-countrymen undoubtedly did at that time. They expected the removal of the external framework of life in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, and the immediate institution of a new external order in which the old positions would be reversed. The Jews, hitherto a subject people, would be established in independence and power under the direct hand of God. That was a common belief in those days. And while we may be sure that Jesus was not very much concerned with the political prospects of his people, we can easily see that there is much in his teaching that may be made to give colour to the view that he expected a great and swift reversal of the normal ways of the world.

But the chief difficulty in the way of this view is the virtual impossibility of reconciling Jesus' emphasis upon the inwardness of the kingdom with the identification of the kingdom with an external world-order. While the current expectation of the coming of the kingdom was as of a very spectacular affair, Jesus categorically declares that the kingdom cometh not with observation—that is, you cannot see it coming. It is indeed true that some late utterances are attributed to Jesus which seem to contradict this latter saying. And we have either to assume that Jesus changed his mind entirely about the coming of the kingdom in the last week of his life, or to believe that some utterances which are ascribed to him did not fall from his lips, at least in the form in which we have them. Then we have to make up our minds, if we

accept both as authentic words of Jesus, which of them represented his real mind.

In what are called the "eschatological" passages in the teaching of Jesus, the end of the world is associated with the return of the Son of Man in power and great glory. And as this subject has latterly been widely canvassed it might be as well to examine it with a little care.

The term "eschatological" describes a teaching about the last things, about the end. There is another word used in these discussions which describes a view of *how* the end will come. That is the word "apocalyptic." Now apocalyptic comes from a Greek verb which signifies *to unveil,* and it refers specially to the unveiling of future events. But it is used more narrowly with reference to the end of the age or of the world. The Jews have been the greatest exponents of apocalyptic.[1] But its springs are in universal human nature and it always makes its appearance in times of distress. It originates in the inveterate hopefulness of the human spirit, and generally it is the answer of faith to political pessimism. Not a very convincing answer, perhaps, yet embodying a very real faith in the friendliness of God in the teeth of all appearances. When the heavens are as brass, when oppression is bitter and unyielding, and there is no relief in sight, then hope skips a generation or two and faith thinks that it can see beyond the darkness of the present the light of a great deliverance and the promise of happier

[1] Probably having first learned it from the Persians.

things. It was inevitable that a stage should come in the course of the European war when the apocalyptic temper would reappear once more, as we know it did.

The Jewish prophets as a rule expected the deliverance of their people to come through the normal processes of history. They were in no sense apocalyptic. They were content to wait for God's mills to grind out slowly the issues of human affairs. But the long-drawn-out period of alien domination, the distress which went with it, the frustrated throws for freedom, and the deepening sense of utter political impotency induced in the Jewish mind a despair to which the slow processes of history promised no relief. But hope would not die. And since there was no light on the plane of historical happening, men began to look beyond history to the immediate interference of the hand of God. So in the period between the two Testaments the apocalyptic hope shaped itself definitely as an expectation of a deliverance from above, a sudden close of the current dispensation in a colossal setting of sign and portent and political convulsion; and with all this the inauguration of a new order in which the chosen people would at last come into their kingdom. At the time of Jesus' birth, as for a century before, this had doubtless been the habitual idiom of many Jews. Certainly the apocalyptic hope created a considerable body of literature and it was the most conspicuous element in the popular religion. There can be no doubt that Jesus was perfectly familiar with

it, and it would be unreasonable to suppose that he remained unaffected by it. But I have no doubt that he was himself wholly emancipated from it, certainly in its popular form. Nor can I understand anyone reaching any other conclusion from the study of the Gospels. Contrast the tone and atmosphere of the parable of the Prodigal Son with those of the twenty-fourth chapter of St. Luke's gospel. It is hardly credible that the two utterances should have fallen from the same lips, and one is forced to suppose that much of the latter chapter has crept in somehow from a contemporary source other than Jesus or from a later source. Moreover the great emphasis upon "the power and the great glory" of the returning Son of Man is in singular contrast to the studied lowliness of the entry into Jerusalem. There is here a quite obvious contradiction, if we are to take the apocalyptic language literally.

It must be remembered, however, that while we may doubt the authenticity of some of the apocalyptic language ascribed to Jesus, there yet remains a good deal which represents the genuine mind of Jesus. And the question that we have to ask is how we are to read these passages. When we read the parables we do not regard them as stories of real happenings. We know that they are dramatizations of certain truths. May we not in the same way assume that the apocalyptic passages of Jesus are likewise dramatizations of certain truths in another idiom? Are we not to treat them in a frankly symbolical way? For this we have

justification in the example of Jesus himself. "And his disciples asked him saying, Why then say the scribes that Elijah must first come? And he said, Elijah indeed cometh and shall restore all things; but I say unto you that Elijah is come already, and they knew him not and did unto him whatsoever they would."[1] And speaking of John Baptist, he said, "And if ye are willing to receive it, this is Elijah which is to come."[2] Jesus evidently takes the return of Elijah in no literal sense. To his mind Elijah always comes in every prophet whom God sends. Elijah is a symbol for the spirit of prophecy. May not Jesus intend us to take his prediction of his own return in a similar symbolical sense?

In this connection it is significant that Jesus never speaks of his return in the first person. It is the kingdom, or the Son of Man that is to come. When we recall the clear connection of these terms with Daniel's vision, it is not inconceivable that Jesus was using them to symbolize that divine order which is yet to be and which is the true predestined order for human life. Using the popular religious idiom of his day, he dramatized in the picture of his own return a process which is inherent and permanent in human affairs. May we not suppose that in every human happening which has brought the divine order nearer, however little, and however partially, there has been a real coming of the Son of Man?

But this is not all. We have been so indoctrinated

[1] Matt. xvii. 10-12. [2] Matt. xi. 14.

with the idea of evolution that we suppose that history must unfold itself in a slow and orderly fashion, taking its own time about it. But the apocalyptic emphasis brings the necessary protest against this view of history. It is not necessary to wait upon the slow movement of history. We can hustle history, if we will. For the essence of apocalyptic is, as Dr. Oman has finely and finally said, that "the divine order is always ready to break into the world when men are ready to let it break into their hearts."

We who have lived through the Great War do not need to have it proved to us that there is a "catastrophic" element in history. But it would be a mistake to suppose that because history has its catastrophic moments it is not evolutionary all the time. For the "catastrophe," whether it be light or darkness or both, is after all only the final convergence of streams of influence that have been slowly moving and maturing for a long time. And Jesus foresaw both slow processes of growth and swift portentous movements in the future course of the new order. The kingdom comes not with observation; for the most part, you cannot see it coming. It is a seed growing secretly. But one day your eyes are opened, and you will see it "in power and great glory." But not, indeed, power and glory of the worldly kind. When the Son of Man comes in his glory, you need not be surprised to find that his glory consists in a suit of working-man's overalls. It certainly will have nothing in common with the trappings of secular royalty which

he too often wears in the minds of those who, with a faith having more devotion than discernment, would persuade us that Jesus in his very person is even now at the door, to inaugurate, as they say, his personal reign.

When one speaks of history as evolutionary one is thinking of it merely as working out what is within itself whether for good or for evil. But the idea of evolution has been applied to human affairs in a way which suggests that there is in human nature a certain principle of inevitable advance, a fated growth from worse to better and at last to perfection. This is what at its best we mean when we speak of "progress." Of course, some people when they speak of progress think of pullman cars and flying machines; and that kind of thing is indeed a sort of progress. But we are now thinking of real progress, progress toward perfection in character and the realization of life. We cannot discuss so large a question here, but it belongs to our purpose to observe that you will search in vain in the teaching of Jesus for anything that supports a doctrine of inevitable and predestined progress. Jesus believed in human perfectibility but not in the certainty of human perfection. Indeed, there were moments when he looked upon the human future with misgiving. "When the Son of Man cometh, shall he find faith upon the earth?"[1] This, however, must not be taken to mean that human perfection is unattainable, but simply that it is not inevitable. There

[1] Luke xviii. 8.

is no irresistible force from behind pushing us onward to the City of God. We are the masters of our fate and we do not make progress in spite of ourselves. We shall grow from good to better and on to perfection if we will to have it so, and not otherwise.

CHAPTER VI

The Son of Man

(Matt. iv. 1-11; ix. 9-13; xi. 25-30; xiii. 31-33; Mark iii. 1-19; viii. 27-31; xv. 1-41.)

I

"Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not his mother called Mary? And his brethren . . . and his sisters, are they not all with us? Whence then hath this man these things?"

IT is impossible to say at what point in his life Jesus became aware of his calling. His realization of the task to which he was appointed grew through a number of years and a series of experiences. That he had some kind of "soul's awakening" in his twelfth year appears from the story; and it is tolerably safe to assume that from this point onward to his formal entry upon a public ministry at the time of his baptism, his sense of a divine mission grew in intensity and clearness until it became an unwavering certainty. He took the religious revival which had been quickened by his kinsman John as the signal for his own appearance, and when he emerges into publicity, he is altogether sure of himself and of his commission.

The gospel records are much too scanty to enable us to trace with any assurance the development of Jesus' thought and feeling about himself. Was he aware of himself as "the Christ of God" at the time of his baptism, or did it become clear to him at the time of Peter's confession? The question cannot be answered and need not be argued. The one thing that we may be sure of is that, however he may have interpreted himself, he was altogether sure of himself from the very beginning of his ministry; and his self-assurance seems never to have deserted him—unless one is to interpret the Agony in Gethsemane and the Cry of Dereliction as symptoms of self-doubting. Otherwise he was never unsure of himself. There were other things about which he was not so sure and about which he changed his mind. But he never lost confidence in himself—until perhaps (as has been said) in the last tense and heart-breaking hours of his life.

He spoke, according to those who heard him, "as one having authority."[1] The scribes appealed to authority outside themselves, but Jesus had his authority in himself. The prophets began their preaching with the formula: "Thus saith the Lord," but Jesus said: "I say unto you." With the phenomenon of egoism we are familiar enough; and we know it when we see it. We know, moreover, that it is not the same thing as this self-assurance of Jesus. We detect a man's egoism in his tone of voice,

[1] Matt. vii. 29.

in his gesture, by a score of self-betraying signs. We suspect that the man's excess of emphasis upon himself is at bottom a mere affectation of authority and power. He is never quite so sure of himself as he sounds. But when Jesus says "I" or "Me," it is in a simple, spontaneous, unaffected way. There is no assumption of an authority which cannot make itself good, no self-esteem, no gesture of pity for meaner minds, no desire to dominate—none of the symptoms of a vulgar egoism. Yet there is no hesitation in the use of the first personal pronoun: "Come unto me, . . . and I will give you rest."[1] "Bring him hither to me."[2] It is all perfectly natural, unpretentious, and uncalculated. There is a spontaneity and a simplicity about it which makes it a thing by itself. No other man could speak about himself in quite this way and Jesus is perhaps the only person who could say of himself, "I am meek and lowly of heart,"[3] without showing in his face that he was telling a lie. If we ever heard any other man say it, we should at once think of Uriah Heep.

Only once, so far as we know, did Jesus depart from this simple unstudied habit of speech and bearing. That was the occasion of the Entry into Jerusalem,[4] when Jesus, having spoken many parables, acted a parable in which he was the leading figure. But he assumed that unusual rôle in order to dramatize and make graphic that doctrine of sovereignty which

[1] Matt. xi. 28.
[2] Matt. xvii. 17.
[3] Matt. xi. 29.
[4] Matt. xxi. 1-11.

his people so persistently repudiated—the sovereignty of force being then, as it is still, the only kind that people believed in. He actualized the terms of an old vision—the king riding upon an ass—in order to preach the kingliness of lowliness and the royalty of service.

Yet note that he assumes for himself the character of a king. But kingliness was a wholly new thing upon his shoulders. "The kings of the Gentiles have lordship over them . . . But ye shall not be so: but he that is the greater among you, let him become as the younger, and he that is chief, as he that doth serve."[1] He was turning the old conventions upside down. But there is no doubt that there was something symbolical in his whole habit of regarding himself. In much of his speech concerning himself there is a strangely impersonal quality. He called himself the "Son of Man"; and whatever may have been the origins of the name, and whatever eschatological associations the name may have had, there can be no doubt that in Jesus' use of it, it stood for the typical, essential, representative man, the embodiment of essential manhood. "The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath. Therefore the Son of Man is lord even of the sabbath."[2] The Son of Man is not a man so much as he is all men.

Now this is a very singular claim to make. How Jesus reached this point of self-identification is something that the Gospels do not explain or afford the

[1] Luke xxii. 25-26. [2] Mark ii. 27-28.

materials for explaining. It is to be observed further that as Son of Man he claims a prerogative which had hitherto been ascribed to God alone. "The Son of Man hath power to forgive sins."[1] He took it upon himself to say: "Thy sins are forgiven." Of course, if we go outside the Gospels the easy explanation of this is that Jesus, being the Incarnation of God, was entitled to remit sins; but this does not touch the fact that it was as Son of Man that he claimed the power to forgive sins. But we are now raising difficult questions which are not germane to our immediate purpose. We are not immediately concerned with the theological interpretation of Jesus but with what he appeared to be to himself in the Gospels.

The upshot of all this is that Jesus as a man makes certain claims which we could not hear another man make without thinking him either a madman or a charlatan; but the fact that we still take Jesus seriously after so long a time shows that there was no incongruity between himself and his claims. But this brings us face to face with the paradox that Jesus as a man makes claims which seem to put him in a class apart from the ordinary man. It does not help us to say that the difference is that between the morally perfect and the imperfect. This is not a question of character. What man is there who could (for instance) say as Jesus said: "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of

[1] Matt. ix. 6.

them "?[1] What we have here is not a sense of moral perfection but a unique quality of self-consciousness, a peculiar sense of self-hood, of personality. It is in this connection not irrelevant to point out that Jesus does not appear to have ever prayed with his disciples. The only time he ever said "Our Father" was when he was teaching his disciples to say it. For the rest it was always "My Father" and "Your Father." The gospel account certainly leaves upon us an impression that Jesus stood in a unique relation to life, to the universe, to God. The nature of that relation is a matter we shall leave to theologians to expound, asking of them only that they shall offer us no explanation which leaves us a Jesus with a compromised manhood.[2] For after all, "the Son of Man came eating and drinking . . . a friend of publicans and sinners."[3]

[1] Matt. xviii. 20.

[2] Jesus himself does not give us any light upon this relation, nor does he say whether it is a relation which other men can ever attain to. But the New Testament writers have apparently their own view upon the matter. St. Paul looks to a time when "the only begotten Son of God" shall be "the first-born among many brethren" (Rom. viii. 29)—*primus inter pares.* The writer of the Apocalypse puts upon the lips of Jesus the words, "He that overcometh, I will give to him to sit down with me in my throne, as I also overcame and sat down with my Father in his throne" (Rev. iii. 21). And in that great interpretation of the heart of Jesus, the seventeenth chapter of the Fourth Gospel, we have the prayer "that they all may be one, I in them and Thou in me" (John xvii. 22-23). This matter also is for the theologian. Theology has yet to make up its mind about the problem of personality—in man and in God.

[3] Matt. xi. 19.

II

"The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."

What Jesus conceived his mission to be we have already seen. He had been called to establish a new order of life in the world, the kingdom of heaven. But it would be a misapprehension to suppose that he had come to "start a movement," as we say. He certainly was altogether innocent of any knowledge of the technique of starting a movement, if he had anything of the sort in his mind. He had no organization save a loosely-bound following with a small inner circle of disciples whom he was training for a special task. He had no office, no organs of publicity, no endorsing lists of high-sounding names—and they knew the value of that kind of thing in those days as well as we do to-day. It would be truer to say that Jesus was starting a ferment rather than a movement. His business was to set afoot a contagion of life. And while he could not escape a good deal of publicity—"He could not be hid"—and did arouse a great amount of popular excitement whenever he appeared, it came unsought, and as a rule Jesus seems to have felt it an embarrassment.[1] He was afraid of what we should call "the psychology of the crowd," and while there were times when he could not avoid it, he was far from exploiting it as the modern revival-

[1] Mark i. 45.

ist method does. Jesus trusted to the self-propagating virtue of the new life. The man in whom it was kindled could be trusted to kindle it in others.

This does not mean that Jesus did not believe in propaganda.[1] He did indeed believe in it very profoundly, and was actively engaged in it most of the time. Moreover, he sent out his disciples on missions of propaganda on two occasions. This was what he called "sowing the seed."[2] But it was a propaganda of life rather than of ideas. And for this, preaching was of less value than personal contact. A friend of mine—a minister of many years standing—said not long ago in my hearing: "If I had my ministry over again, I would spend three-quarters of the time I have spent in making sermons in making friends." Allow for the natural over-emphasis of the epigram, and you have here essentially a true principle, the principle of Jesus. He took every opportunity of making a friend, and to make a friend was to make a convert to the kingdom. While this personal and immediate ministry of Jesus was not the only method which he adopted, it is well to remember that it was the foundation of everything else, and he never desisted from it throughout his public life. It had first claim upon him. When Matthew was resigning from his office as tax-collector, he gave a farewell feast to his former colleagues and associates. They made a very dubious

[1] It is a pity that this word "propaganda" should tend to be used exclusively for the official dissemination of half-truths and lies by governments.

[2] Mark iv. 14.

party, but Jesus accepted Matthew's invitation without hesitation—to the great scandal of the Pharisees,[1] who thought it bad form and bad religion to be mixed up with that sort of person. Our trouble to-day is not that we should think it bad form, but that most of us would be too busy with the church organization to have any time for mixing with outsiders of that particular type. The card-indexes must be kept in order, the plans for the autumn have to be attended to, the machine has to be overhauled and kept well oiled. And, of course, if one is at the head of a great religious organization, one has a vast business correspondence to see to, office details to look after, and committees—scores of them—to attend, that keep us too busy to dine with publicans and sinners. But with Jesus, the publicans and sinners came first. "I came to seek and to save the lost,"[2] and he went straight to the point. No considerations of propriety or thought of what others would say interfered with his approach to this person or that, if the road was in any wise open. It was folk that mattered to him; and he had time and leisure for all the folk who came and went. He did not have to hurry off to keep another appointment in the middle of an interview. His primary method was that of friendship and fellowship, and when he told his disciples that they were "the salt of the earth,"[3] he was suggesting to them that they had to keep close to people if their antiseptic virtue was to

[1] Matt. ix. 10-11. [2] Luke xix. 10. [3] Matt. v. 13.

keep life sweet and clean. And what Jesus gave to the people was himself, the very stuff of his life. "I perceived that power had gone forth from me,"[1] he said one day after a sick woman had touched him; and virtue was going out of him all the time, now to a publican of notorious and unpleasant reputation, now to a woman of doubtful past, again to a perplexed "ruler of the Jews." He had something to give and he never withheld it. At its best, fellowship, friendship—what is it but a hidden commerce, a mystic market-place where we barter life for life in a communion of love, wherein we become part of each other? And this it was in Jesus, only the bargain was overwhelmingly on the other side, for they had little to give, while he gave everything, even life itself.

And so he went about among men, touching this man and that into life. But he did this not because his thought excluded every method of working but a purely private and personal ministry. On the contrary, he looked for a new order of life, a kingdom. He saw a vision not of a scattering of quickened individuals, but of a society of remade men living together. And it was because his view of his mission contained this larger hope that his threefold temptation at the beginning of his ministry caused him so great heart-searching. He knew that a public ministry lay ahead of him, that he had to assume a task of public leadership; his light had to be placed in a candlestick. And the inwardness of these temptations

[1] Luke viii. 46.

lay precisely in the speciousness of the methods that they proposed to him for his public work.

We should greatly err if we supposed that any single line of interpretation exhausted the meaning of the Temptation. There is a concentration of experience in it that I think is beyond adequate exposition and there has been a very great variety of interpretation of the incident in the course of Christian history. But it would appear that the primary element in the Temptation was determined by the circumstance that Jesus was standing upon the threshold of his public work; and in the first instance, therefore, the three temptations must have referred to the *method* of his work. It is necessary, of course, to remember that this was not the only occasion of temptation; it is probable that Jesus was never wholly immune from temptation during his public life; but it is sure that he encountered no subsequent temptation which was not present in substance in the three great temptations after the baptism.

The first temptation was that he should become a provider of bread to the multitude. It was plainly a temptation to gather a following by the distribution of alms. After all, it was a good thing to feed the people—for they were always underfed; and having won them by charity, why then, they would receive the word. But Jesus saw that there would be no reality in a spiritual ministry which made its first appeal to people's stomachs.

The second temptation was that he should play a

spectacular part and establish himself as a prodigy. The crowd is usually as curious as it is hungry, and Jesus could have won a wide popularity by acquiring a reputation as a wonder-worker. We can see how deeply the fear of anything of this kind had entered into the soul of Jesus from his reluctance to allow the reports of his healings to get abroad. For it would divert men's attentions from what he was chiefly eager to pass on to them. He saw that the policy suggested in the temptation would compromise his ministry from the very start. He might have gained a great following in this way; but he knew that a great following is not the same thing as the Kingdom of God.

The third temptation was a temptation to compromise, to come to terms with evil.[1] But to have accepted any compromise would have been at once deadly. For it would have betrayed a lack of confidence in the inherent power of the message to win through. But Jesus' realism never forsook him. He saw that any compromise would from the nature of the case cut the nerve of his hope and his mission.

It was the voice of worldly wisdom that spoke in these temptations. But Jesus saw that to do any of these things was to establish the new order on an illusory and hollow foundation. The first requirement was moral and spiritual reality, and he knew

[1] There is nothing to show what the actual form of the proposed compromise was; but I incline to the view that it was a suggestion to use "method of force, the characteristic policy of the kingdoms of the world."

that he had to wait for that, however long it might take. It might seem to be the longest way round, but it was the only way to the goal. Jesus had no faith in the easy by-path. The alternative was a long road, a hard road, but it was the only road that did not belie its own promise from the start. He would choose the way of faith and quiet rationality and utter truth, for there was no other way to the goal which he sought. And so he would go among men, seeking their soul, their reason, their conscience; and if this meant long waiting, endless patience, invincible endurance, very well, so be it. For it was the only way. It was " the way of God's rule in however few and the patient endurance of love however long."

So that was settled for good and all. Jesus dismissed all the expedients of worldly wisdom and followed his own road. His task was to set afoot a contagion of life, and his way was to get into touch with men. He was encumbered with no nice or intricate questions of statecraft or public policy. His strategy was perfectly simple. The one thing that he had to do was to seek out the people, this man and that man, and small companies of them in their synagogues and tell them " the good news "; and let " the good news " work out its own consequences.

III

"The Son of Man goeth as it is written of him."

It was natural that Jesus should turn to the villages and synagogues of Galilee. Jerusalem, even Judæa, was not promising ground for a start. The nearer one was to the Temple, the more one felt the embarrassment and the pressure of the past, of tradition, of the "dead hand." The air became clearer as one drew away from the metropolis. And in Galilee, religion was less "official," less sophisticated, less hardened, than it was in the capital. Jesus went about the village synagogues and preached in them, as any layman might have done who felt he had anything to say; and it is plain that before very long his name began to be noised abroad as a man with "a new teaching"[1]—and upon that, Jesus' troubles began. It led to the abandonment of one part of his original plan, and at last constrained him to another momentous line of action.

Jesus, like everyone before and after him who has preached a "new doctrine," proposed to do so and remain within the existing religious institutions. And it seems more than probable that Jesus hoped that the new order of life would be ushered in (as has already been pointed out) on the crest of a spiritual awakening within Judaism itself. This accounts for the systematic preaching in the Galilean synagogues. And after all, why should not Judaism blossom once more

[1] Mark i. 27-28.

as the rose, wilderness though just then it might be? Jesus would have avowed that his own faith went back to "Moses and the prophets," and that there was nothing alien to the prophetic religion in his message. Rather was it the fulfilment of what the prophets had spoken, the unrealized logic of their faith. It was the natural place for Jesus to begin, and he had good ground for his hope that Judaism might flower forth into new life. There is, indeed, no knowing what might have happened if there had been no interference from without. But no sooner did the Temple authorities hear of this innovator in the north than they dispatched a number of their secret service men, *agents-provocateurs*, and the like to watch him and to report. They also sent some of their pundits to "heckle" him and to dispute with him. It was not difficult to discover subjects of controversy; and indeed one subject alone proved so fruitful in occasions of debate that no other was needed. That, of course, was the subject of sabbath observance.

We need not go over the story of the controversy, save only to recall that it came to a climax with the healing of the man with the withered hand on the sabbath day in the synagogue.[1] That day, as we have seen, Jesus left the synagogue—and except on one doubtful occasion did not thereafter enter the synagogue at all.[2] It was the end of his hope of a religious

[1] Mark iii. 1-6.

[2] Matthew and Mark record a visit to the synagogue in Nazareth after this incident; but in Luke's account this visit appears to have been paid before this time.

efflorescence within Judaism. The wine-skin had grown too old and brittle. The fire could not be rekindled upon the old hearthstone. The synagogue had proved a blind alley.

In the midst of the domestic confusion of France in the twenties of the last century, Lamennais, looking out upon it with the eye of a prophet, wrote about it: "It is necessary to lay in advance the foundations of a new society . . . the old is rotten, it is dead and cannot be revived again. . . . Our work lies in the creation of peoples." This might well serve as a description of Jesus' feeling after the breach with the synagogue. It is very significant that almost immediately after, we find him selecting a small company from among his followers and attaching them to his person, "that they might be with him."[1] He saw that his work lay in the creation of a people, and of this people the twelve were the nucleus. He was "laying in advance the foundations of a new society." And we are reminded how, many years after, when the disciples of Jesus had greatly multiplied, they were described as "a new race." The selection of the twelve was the first step in the creation of a new society in and through which the new life was to function.

Shortly after, Jesus spent some months in retirement with the twelve. During this time, largely spent outside the confines of Palestine, the twelve were trained for the great office that Jesus had in mind for

[1] Mark iii. 13-19.

them. But the greater part of the training was the fellowship with Jesus; and the sign of their graduation was the fact that they had acquired the spiritual insight which was able to identify him. When Peter said that he was "the Christ of God,"[1] Jesus knew that their eyes had been opened. They had followed him first as a man eager for light might follow a teacher. But they found in the teacher a messenger of God whose business was to do rather than to teach, whose task lay not in a round of local preaching or in the establishment of a new sect, but in some large way on the plane of the public life of the nation. All this was very vague and dim in their minds, no doubt; but it was clear enough to prepare them for the next stage of the ministry of their master.

At this point comes another significant circumstance. "He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes, and be killed."[2] The period spent in retirement was not spent entirely in the education of the twelve. During that time, Jesus had his own personal problem to think about. His personal and private ministry he could carry on as the occasion offered; and occasions did not fail. But his public ministry in the synagogues had been frustrated. And in the interval between the incident in the synagogue and his retirement into Syrophœnicia, and during one or two brief excursions subsequently into Galilee, it became perfectly clear

[1] Mark viii. 27-30. [2] Mark viii. 31.

that the tireless attentions of the Pharisees and their intrigues with the Herodians would make quite impossible a preaching ministry in the country at large. What then was he to do? Was he to be content with a purely private and (as it were) underground propaganda? There was too much at stake to allow Jesus to be satisfied with this solution, for he was not pursuing an affair of his own. His sense of himself as the symbol of a new order of life, the organ of the kingdom of God, called for action more positive and drastic than a subterranean diffusion of "the good news." Moreover, the obstruction which had been put in his way and which hindered the kingdom was a public affair, a circumstance to be met publicly, and as Jesus clearly saw, to be met in its stronghold. It grew on him that he "must go up to Jerusalem."[1] For in Jerusalem was focused the strength of this sinister thing that thwarted him. It was the home of Anti-Christ. And he, the Christ, the Son of Man, was under necessity to go up to Jerusalem to proclaim in his own person the challenge of the kingdom—there where were gathered together all the forces that hindered the kingdom. There were the traditionalists, the politicians, the nationalists, all those who worshipped "this world's unspiritual God." There were the ecclesiastics, who suffered the Temple to be defiled for the emoluments it brought to them, and who foresaw their own undoing in the spread of Jesus' influence. There were also blind but honest

[1] Matt. xvi. 21.

tories who were (as Walter Bagehot might have said) "cross with the agony of a new idea." Jerusalem was the metropolis of reaction and corruption. And thither, plainly, Jesus, being what he was, had to go. So "he set his face steadfastly to go to Jerusalem."[1]

He went with his eyes open, knowing what awaited him. He had, indeed, plenty of precedents upon which to go in his prevision of what lay before him. He had the experience of the prophets, and he cannot have failed to recall the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah. For he expected to "suffer many things." But all other roads were blocked. There was nothing left for him to do but to show to his brethren the nature of their moral trouble, the whole black thing that was wrong with the world, by standing over against it and letting it work out its utmost consequences upon his own person before the eyes of all men. And so it came to pass.

IV

"The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister and to give his life a ransom for many."

Anatole France in one of his stories describes Pontius Pilate, grown old and taking a summer cure at a Roman watering-place, and in a conversation only vaguely recalling the trial and death of Jesus. That

[1] Luke ix. 51.

was the measure of the affair to the official mind, a mere incident of daily politics. And even now when we think of the matter with a little detachment, it seems singular that what on the face of it appears to be no more than the rather squalid and contemptible end of an obscure peasant in an obscure corner should have become the master-fact of history.

The truth is that "the instinct of mankind" has always felt in the story the presence of certain elements which are not to be measured by the common footrule of historical judgment. We seem to move here in the region of something like absolute moral contrasts, where circumstances of publicity or obscurity, of size and numbers, of time and place, sink into comparative unimportance. The event is historical; but it is also superhistoric. It moves on a plane of timelessness. The first thing, but certainly the least thing, that we say about the Cross is that it happened on a certain day at a certain place. The date of the Cross is not a particular day but all time; the site of the Cross is not Jerusalem but the whole earth. The Cross is the moral crisis of the whole race, the epitome and symbol of its moral tragedy and of its hope.

What happened to Jesus had in kind happened before. It had happened to Jeremiah, it happens whenever a prophet is stoned or burnt or shot. But the Cross has its own uniqueness. Moral judgments upon human sin in history—such as the late war—are seen through the haze of human imperfection, in

a twilight of mingled motives of good and evil, and the innocent suffer with the guilty. But when the power of human evil broke upon Jesus, it was seen in its own true colour, darkness against light, black against white, with no blurred edges and no twilight zone . . . and the innocent alone suffered. It is this which invests the Cross with its superhistoric quality. It is felt to be a revelation of absolute moral distinctions.

The death of Jesus was the natural outworking of human self-love. In the death of the Son of Man, symbol at once of the kingdom of God and of essential humanity, we have the abiding apocalypse of sin, the revelation of its anti-social nature and consequences. The crucifixion of Jesus remains the supreme instance and embodiment of that contempt of personality which is the firstfruits of our self-love and the undoing of our human solidarity. The Cross is the whole wide tragedy of mankind focused down to one point of utter darkness.

But the Cross reveals much more than the truth about sin. Above the confusion of Calvary, through the tumult and clamour, a voice was heard saying: "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do."[1] Above the noise of hell was heard the voice of the everlasting mercy, the last word of God over against the worst deed of man. "The love of enemies," says Dr. P. T. Forsyth, "is love being true to itself through everything." Here it is—love

[1] Luke xxiii. 34.

without a limit. There is a note of the ultimate in this prayer to which men's hearts have never failed to respond, recognizing in it a depth and a reach of charity essentially divine. "Truly," said the centurion, "this man was the son of God."[1] The prayer has come down the ages as the most godlike word that ever fell on human hearing. For all the infamy, the lust, the blindness that broke upon the Son of Man and which is for ever laying waste this fair earth of our inheritance, God has this final word of mercy. When sin has done its worst and its utmost, mercy holds the field. The Cross is the everlasting mercy, focused down to one glorious word of life.

It matters little here whether we think of God as immanent or incarnate in Jesus; the point of the Cross is the same. It reveals the moral order of the world because it reveals the moral nature of God. Someone has finely said that "the Cross is the ground plan of the universe." It means that love is the principle of life, a love that is true to itself to the end and is sufficient in itself for the need of man. Sin is rebellion; love meets it with reconciliation. God opposes to sin the gift of forgiveness freely and royally given, without money and without price. God's revenge is forgiveness, God's punishment is pardon. This is the unbearable retribution of love.

A noted English preacher once said that "when on earth Jesus was never off the Cross." Certainly the Cross gathered up his life into perfect completeness,

[1] Mark xv. 39.

and what he says on the Cross he said throughout his life. The will to love, the will to forgive, the will to serve, the will to give one's life a ransom for many, these are the things by which it is appointed that men shall live; and not otherwise. It is these things that the Cross proclaims, as the deepest truth of the life of God and, by that token, the final law of the life of man.

BY WAY OF EPILOGUE

The Wingless Victory

ON the Acropolis at Athens stand the ruins of a beautiful little temple dedicated (so the story goes) to *Nike Apteros,* the Wingless Victory. The legend has it that the statue of Victory was chiselled without wings in order to symbolize the hope and the confidence of the Athenians that victory would thereafter never desert their city. To-day the temple is a battle-scarred ruin, symbol of the fickleness of whatever gods there be that dispense the fortunes of war. The victory it celebrated is an old forgotten story. But despite its scars, its beauty still remains.

Here is a parable as full of meaning as an egg is of meat. We speak of " the glory that was Greece." But what do we mean when we say the words? We are not thinking of the victories of Greece or of its empire, though these were notable in their day. An incident here and there in its history, the story of Thermopylæ for instance, still warms our blood. But there is little in the external history of Greece to distinguish it from the history of any other country. The glory of the

Greek lay in other things. He was the pathfinder of the intellect; for human thought still travels along the trails that he blazed. His vision of beauty raised life to a new plane of worth and wonder; and the loveliness he created has become the priceless inheritance of the race. His poets and dramatists still speak a living word, for they uttered ultimate things that never grow old. The true Wingless Victory of Athens was not in its triumph upon any field of battle or in the invincibility of its armies at any time, for all that passed away; but in the expression of its inner life in a great pioneering search for truth and in enduring works of beauty.

A few days' journey from Athens will bring you to another historic hill. Upon that hill was raised one day not a temple but a cross, a criminal's gibbet. On the face of it what happened that day seemed to be little more than an ordinary incident of daily imperial politics. The civil magistrate had done his duty to the empire; and if the case had been a little unusual and the law had been unduly strained—well, you never know where that kind of thing might end, and now, thank goodness, it was over and done with. And Pilate turned in his frigid official way to the next piece of imperial business that required attention. The high ecclesiastics of Jerusalem saw only a mischievous fanatic, who threatened their authority and endangered the integrity of the church, put safely out of the way. The event was a triumph for the combined forces of church and state. To the political official as well as

to the churchman it was a closed incident, a wingless victory. At least so it looked at the time. We know how it looks to-day.

. . . . . .

Here, surely, is something that can bear a good deal of thinking about. Most of our human troubles, the deepest and vastest of our human tragedies spring at last from this—that men have never seriously sat down to think what is involved in this great and persistent historical paradox. It is the surest clue to the kind of world that we live in, and to the kind of people that we should be. The Athenian Victory is (as I have said) an old forgotten story, hardly to be discerned through the mists of time. To-day it simply does not matter. But the beauty which commemorated it still remains a joy for ever. Pilate and Caiaphas, who wrought so satisfying and final a work on Calvary, are to-day remembered as a couple of common hangmen. Both in Athens and Jerusalem the tables were turned. In Athens, it was Beauty and not Might that won the wingless victory. In Jerusalem the wingless victory went not to empire or to organized religion, but to the love which was incarnate in the person of Jesus.

Yet it is the sad and strange fact that after so long a time and in the teeth of all his experience, man has set his heart upon the victory that deserts him and upon the achievement that perishes. Not yet does he understand that the wingless victory belongs to the

things that spring from his hidden life, to the beauty that he creates, to the love that clothes life with loveliness. He still supposes that this world that he sees is the only world that matters, and that the things that count are those that can be counted. If he does at all acknowledge that there is an unseen world and a part of life that is out of sight, it is as a sort of sentimental and romantic fringe that may be attended to when there is no more serious business on hand. And the serious things are the external things, wealth, power, empire. This is the frame of mind that we sometimes call materialism; we have lately learnt to call it *real-politik,* when it turns to public affairs. When it carries out its own logic, it frowns on all idealisms and enthusiasms as dangerous foolishness which threatens the state and interferes with business. It tramples underfoot the instances of religion and the scruples of conscience; it rides rough-shod over all principles and sentiments that withstand its purposes. Its tests of prosperity are territory, markets, bank-balances, social prestige: and its law (unavowed, of course) is the law of the jungle. Yet what history has to say about these things is not to be mistaken. It tells of the transitory and perishable character of these material goods. They bear upon them the very image and superscription of death. Empires rise, fall and disappear; and

> "Imperial Cæsar, dead and turned to clay,
> May stop a hole to keep the wind away."

Institutions flourish and perish, and moth and rust corrupt the treasure that we so painfully gather. Civilizations that were the glory of their day and seemed to have upon them the very sign of immortality have vanished; and to-day we gather their forgotten history from the debris and the sandheaps that were once their prosperous cities.

"They say the lion and the lizard keep
The courts where Jamshyd gloried and drank deep,
And Bahram, that great hunter, the wild ass
Stamps o'er his head but cannot break his sleep."

It is something more than a morbid poetic fancy that sees us living in the valley of the shadow of death. But must the sign of mortality be for ever upon the handiwork of man? Are we doomed to labour forever in making things that are predestined to decay and ruin? Is mankind condemned to an eternity of these labours of Sisyphus, building empires and civilizations only to pull them down again? Must his victories always have wings?

. . . . . .

The truth about man is that, so far, he has never lived more than a fraction of his possible life, and by far the greater part of human nature is unexplored and unrealized. Here and there along the centuries there have been great outgoings of light and fire from these hidden depths, evidence of energies and capaci-

ties of which the ordinary man is unaware. Yet the materials are buried in us which might raise the whole of life to dimensions of splendour and glory that would make the best of the past seem but the flicker of a rushlight. Some hints of what this life might be we can gather from the beauty of the Parthenon and the temple of the Wingless Victory, from the vision of prophets and poets who have descried afar off the grandeur of the human promise. You may see it all within the compass of a single life in Jesus of Nazareth. It is no idle dream that sees the whole level of life raised to the height of the high peaks of the past. For the materials of it are here, and God has not yet deserted his world. There is away "beyond the bound of the waste," a city of God awaiting its builders, a city whose dwellers shall be poets and prophets and seers, having the mind of Christ, a city of supermen and superwomen who spend their lives in works of love and beauty, and whose city reflects the light of their own loveliness. And that city shall not be left desolate, nor shall time wear down its youth or despoil it of its fairness. It is our task to build that city—and what is more, we can.

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But not one stone of that city shall we lay upon another until the city be building in our own souls. The Kingdom within alone can create the Kingdom without. And if the Kingdom be within us, we can-

not but create the Kingdom without. It is the paradox of this new wine that it makes its own wine-skins; the new life begets organs and an environment that befit it. The new order will grow spontaneously out of the new life.

This new life has its own characteristic ways of working, and there are three things that it does for us.

First, it turns upon matter with a vision of beauty, and transfigures it into a vehicle for that beauty. William Blake says in one place: "A Poet, a Painter, a Musician, an Architect, the man or woman who is not one of these is not a Christian." This is a hard saying for some of us, but we may for our comfort remember that though we be artists in desire and appreciation only, we have good title to claim a place in Blake's Christian company. But what he means by this saying is that Art is the kingdom of God expressing itself in the medium of material things. The beauty of the *Nike Apteros* is a spiritual vision translated into stone; and so men may translate into sound and colour the loveliness that is revealed to the spirit. This life is the mother of a living art.

Second, this life gives to the mind the key of truth, not the whole truth or the ultimate truth, but the way into such truth as a man needs to live by. Man has been from the beginning of days searching for truth; but he has gone by the way of speculation along the highroad of logic; and he has returned from all his searching, bringing back the question with which he started: What is truth, and where is it to be found?

But when the kingdom is come in a man, he has the key of truth in it; and he has it as a criterion of knowledge and an interpretation of life. This man starts out where the philosopher wistfully hopes one day to arrive; and when he passes on to men the truth that he sees, it is not in the formal treatise of the schools, but in some flaming prophetic word, or sung in a sonnet, or dramatized in a tale—as Jesus passed on the truth that was in him to men.

Third, it turns upon men with love and by loving them redeems them. In our blind folly we have supposed that the anarchy and waywardness of human nature is to be overcome by coercions and restraints, by pains and penalties: and in our blindness we have but multiplied crime and misery. God sets out to win us from our rebellion by unyielding love, and of that love Jesus is the very embodiment and incarnation. The story of Jesus is "the instance of love without a limit," the love that will not let me go or give me up, that flings down party-walls and overleaps frontiers, flings wide the gate of friendship to the enemy; the impulse and the energy that creates the sovereign loveliness, the loveliness of a living society of men, purged of enmities and discords and hatreds, living out its manifold and abundant life in the unbroken harmony of unreserving fellowship.

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"Except a grain of wheat fall into the earth and die it abideth alone: but if it die, it beareth much

fruit.'"[1] That is the cost of life. It finds itself only by losing itself. It creates beauty only by pouring itself out. "Without the shedding of blood," said the old word, "there is no remission of sins," no, nor anything else worth having, no freedom, no beauty, no art, no life. Life is realized by pouring itself out without stint.

"Love's strength standeth in love's sacrifice."

So there was One who poured out his life in death for the love that he bare us, that he might bring us to God and to one another. "Every kindness," says William Blake, "is a little death in the divine image." For all real kindness, even the least, is a self-giving, an outgoing of life. The Cross is the abiding symbol of that self-giving that the love which creates and redeems has always to pay.

But after the Cross, the Resurrection. And just as the Cross is the symbol of life poured forth, so the Resurrection is the symbol of life regained, life enlarged. It is the sacrament of the survival of the life spent in the creation of beauty, in the revelation of truth, in the redeeming of men, these imperishable things that defy change and time and death. A little temple on a hill, a story told by the wayside, a cross of wood, here are the undying, unfading things, that survive the changes and accidents of time while all other things are laden with mortality. For these are

[1] John xii. 24.

the outworkings of the divine life in the soul of man as he passes through a world of sense. The Resurrection is our assurance that this life not only has immortality in itself but sets the seal of immortality upon all that it touches, whether it be sound or stone, pigment or word, or, best of all, a human soul. It creates and redeems for eternity. And hereto, and only hereto, to this life to which the Son of Man calls us, belongs the Wingless Victory.

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